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The Reflecter's Defence of his Letter to a Friend, &c.

Jan. 18. 1687.

Guil. Needham, R. R.
in Chriſto P. ac D.D.
Wilhelmo Archiepiſc.
Cant. à Sacr. Domeſt.

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THE
Reflecter's Defence
OF HIS
LETTER to a FRIEND,
AGAINST
The Furious Assaults of Mr I. S.
In his Second
Catholic Letter.

IN
Four *DIALOGUES.*

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Clement Ellis

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A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

I. S. a Roman-Catholick,

AND

C. a Catholick CHRISTIAN.

C. WHatever Honour it may be to *me*, it was, I am sure, a very wonderful Condescension in *you*, Sir, to stoop so low, with all your Glory of *Self-Evidence*, *Absolute Certainty*, and *Infallibility*, as to address a *Catholick Letter* to one, unto whom you allow no more at best, than *honest Ignorance*, and hardly so much, when you are a little out of humor, as *common Sense*, or to understand *English*. How civilly you have therein *Treated* me, how fully you have *Accused*, or how fully *Confuted* me, is not a thing that deserves the notice of many. The things we talk of, are too weighty to rely on either mine or your *Wit*, *Breeding*, *Reputation*, or *Skill*. I am not therefore careful either to *Vindicate* or *Recriminate*, or yet to learn of your *Right Catholick Letter*, how to answer it as it deserves. I shall

only, with your good leave, lay the matter open in a plain *Dialogue*, and leave it to every *moderate Judgment* (in your own words) *to see by the very Methods we take, which side desires and sincerely endeavours that* Truth *may appear.* There is only one little *Mistake* of yours running almost quite through your obliging *Letter*, which it concerns me here to give notice of, because it reflects on the Honour of a *Person*, whose Books I confess my self unworthy to carry after him. Know then, Sir, I beseech you, that you honour me too much in calling me Dr. *St.*'s *Defender*, and my *Letter* a *Defence* of his. I never had the happiness either by Face to be known by him, or in Word or Writing to converse with him. Neither had I his Letter by me, or knew much more of it, when I writ mine, than what I read in *yours*, which I thought not my self obliged to account all *Oracle*. The *Reputation* therefore of that *Great Man* is no way concern'd in my Failings (as you would fain have it); but whatever they are, I alone am to answer for them. This I now tell you, because of your (I will not say after you, *affected*) *Inadvertence*, who might have seen in the Title-page of my *Letter*, that I intended only to *Reflect* on *some Passages* in your *first*; and also in the beginning of it, what they were; all regard to the *Conference* it self, being laid aside. And this I take to be *Answer* enough to a great part of your *Catholick Epistle*.

I. S. Your *Answer* affords no work for a *Replier*, but the most ungrateful one in the world, to be perpetually telling men of their *Faults*, without the least hopes of doing them good, or contributing to their *amendment*. *R. Pref.*

C. Whether then your *Charity* in judging us incorrigible, or your *Wisdom* in writing so long a Letter to no purpose, or your *Delight* in troubling the World with Impertinences, be the greatest, I will not now inquire; but rather

ther by a ſincere promiſe of Amendment, endeavour to put you in better hopes and a more charitable opinion.

I. S. Be pleaſed to leave off your *affected Inſincerities*, otherwiſe I muſt be forced to expoſe them yet farther. *R. pag.* 80.

C. Be pleaſed firſt to exerciſe more your *Charity* in diſcovering them to my ſelf, or I ſhall a little ſuſpect your *Juſtice* in expoſing them to others.

I. S. Your conſtant uſe is, to pick out a few words ſcattered here and there, which you thought you might moſt commodiouſly pervert. *Ib.*

C. If I pick'd up nothing but what you had ſcatter'd, and anſwer'd all I pick'd up, I did all that I undertook to do. You muſt not perſwade me, that I may not anſwer ſome periods of a Diſcourſe, without binding my ſelf thereby to anſwer the whole; though you would make the World believe that all my anſwering is only perverting.

I. S. I have now traced you punctually ſtep by ſtep; wherefore I have reaſon to expect the ſame *exact meaſure* from you. *Ib.*

C. How reaſonable a task this is, I will not diſpute; though I know not why your being at more pains than needed, (as you certainly were, if the Anſwer afforded no more work for a Replier) muſt bind me to be ſo too. But ſeeing you have made this my task, I'll endeavour to obey you; only excuſe me, when you ſtep into the Dirt, if I follow you not, leſt I come to need more *Holy-water* than (by your Letter I gueſs) you can well ſpare. However, the way is tedious, and, as you have made it, rugged enough; 'tis time to ſet forth.

I. S. Perhaps it has ſcarce been ſeen hitherto, that all our *Polemical Conteſts* were reduced within ſo *narrow* a compaſs. *R. Pref.*

C. I like not [*Perhaps,*] I had rather you had ſaid, *Abſolutely,*

solutely, or *Certainly*: Then should I have hoped, seeing they narrow so fast, they would soon have come to nothing. Some of you told us many years ago, when the chief *Question* was, *Which is the only true Church?* That this was the *shortest Compendium of our Controversies*. If you have now found a *shorter* than the *shortest*, why stand we thus at a distance? Let's throw away our Weapons and embrace.

I. S. My first Letter insisted chiefly on two short *Discourses*, whereof the one undertook to shew the *Nullity of the Rule of Faith* claim'd by Dr. *St.* and his *Protestants*: the other, the *Absolute Certainty* of the *Catholic Rule*. *R. Ib.*

C. I hope it will be thought but an *honest Ignorance*, if I be not able to distinguish Dr. *St.*'s *Protestants* from the *Catholick Christians* of the *Church of England*, whose *Rule* of *Faith* is the *Holy Scripture*. Remember now what your *two Discourses* undertook to shew; and when that is shewn indeed, (and I wish you be not in too good earnest to shew it) *wonderful things* (as you speak) will follow, and you will be sure of many *Converts*; yea, I dare say, even of Dr. *St.* and all his *Protestants*. In the mean time, what a neat way of *reducing Controversies* to a *narrower compass* is this, whereby the *Disputants* have not left them any *common Rule*, whereby it may be determined who is in the right?

I. S. The *whole Controversie* was, in short, about the *Certainty* or *Uncertainty* of *Christian Faith*. *Ib.*

C. These words would make one think you are *Narrowing* our Contests into a *wider* compass yet; as if the *Dispute* had been betwixt *Believers* and *Infidels*: and then which Party you would have the *Infidel*, denying the *Certainty* of *Christian Faith*, would not be hard to find. It's a little oddly expressed, but I am willing to make the best on't, and to think that you mean no more than what you

you ſaid but now, that it was about the *Nullity* of *our Rule*, and the *Abſolute Certainty* of *yours*.

I. S. Both of thoſe *Diſcourſes* were ſuppoſed by us to be *Concluſive*. *Ib.*

C. I doubt it not, but you thought them *Abſolute Demonſtrations*; yet I was bold to tell my *Friend* in a *Letter*, I thought you were miſtaken.

I. S. Your whole *Letter* ſeems to have no other deſign, but to bring the *Diſpute* into a *Wrangle*. *Ib.*

C. And you, I thank you, took care it ſhould not loſe its deſign, if that was it; and have return'd me nothing elſe but a *Wrangle* for a *Reply*. But let's fall to our Buſineſs.

I. S. I grieve and wonder there ſhould be ſo little *value* for *Souls* among your *Party*, as to ſend men to the *Tribunal* of God, without furniſhing them with *Aſſurance* that they can *juſtifie* their *Accounts* themſelves. *R. p.* 2.

C. Speak you this in good earneſt, as conſidering how *you* ſhall juſtifie *your Accounts* your ſelf at that *Tribunal*? What better courſe our Party takes to furniſh men with ſuch *Aſſurance*, than yours doth, I told you, *A. p.* 3. whereof you are not pleaſed to take any notice, though you were ſo punctual in tracing me ſtep by ſtep. Now I muſt needs continue my wonder, ſeeing no man can be *aſſured* that he can juſtifie his *Accounts*, unleſs he know that he hath the *Grace* of *God*, and ſeeing you, being a *Roman Catholick*, believe the *Council of Trent*, ſaying, *No man can know that he hath obtain'd the Grace of God*, how you can be ſo unreaſonably exacting, as to require that of our *Party*, which your ſelf believe no man can do.

I. S. If you ſpeak, as I did, of an *Account* of *Faith*, I hope you will not perſwade us, a man cannot know *why he believes*, without knowing whether he be in a *ſtate of Grace*. *R. p.* 3.

C. And I hope you will not endeavour to perſwade us, that a mans bare knowing *why he believes*, will enable him to juſtifie his *Account*, even of his *Faith* it ſelf. We know *why we believe* the *Chriſtian Faith*; think you we are therefore able to juſti-

juſtifie our *Account* of *Faith?* Then our *Diſpute* is ended. Suppoſe another may know why *he believes* the *Pope* to be *Antichriſt*, (as I am ſure he may, whether it be *true* or *falſe*, and his Reaſons *good* or *bad*) I hope you will not grant he can thereby juſtifie his *Account* of *Faith*.

I. S. The bare *Aſſurance* of the *Truth* which a man believes is a *Juſtification* of his *believing* it. *Ib.*

C. You ſpake of an *Account that will paſs, as it is in it ſelf*, (*L. p.* 5.) but this *Account* of *Faith* will not paſs, as it is in it ſelf without *Grace*. Such a bare *Aſſurance* will only be ſuch a *Juſtification* of a man's *believing*, as will add to his *condemnation*, for *holding the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs*, and *knowing his Maſter's will without doing it*.

I. S. If you ſpeak of an *Account* of our *whole lives*,---you turn things againſt the plain *ſcope* of my *Diſcourſe*, againſt my plain *words*, and (I much fear) againſt your own *knowledge*. *Ib.*

C. Your *ſcope* in this part of your *Diſcourſe* was evidently this, to make our *Party* appear *careleſs* of mens *Souls*.

I. S. The only *Queſtion* was of the *Certainty* of *Proteſtant Faith*;---An *Account* why you *Proteſtants* believe---was the only *Account* that belongs to that *Queſtion*. *Ib.*

C. That *Queſtion*, and the ſhifting off the *Proof* to another, you wave in the beginning of your *third Section* (*L. p.* 4.) ſaying, *Of this Propoſal there will be occaſion to ſay more by and by. At preſent conſider* (ſay you) *how you deal with Souls who rely on you:* And all through the *Section* your buſineſs is to charge us with *careleſneſs* of mens *Souls*. I ſuppoſe you mean, eſpecially in our not giving them *Aſſurance* of their *Faith*. This being the *Fault* you charge our *Party* with, you thus proceed to aggravate it: *Muſt not every body one day bring in his own Account?* &c. *And will not the happineſs or miſery of their Souls depend on that Account? Can you ſuffer them to run that terrible hazard, without making them able to* juſtifie *their* Accounts *themſelves, and furniſhing them with* Aſſurance *that they*

they can? &c. These are your plain *words*; and if I mistook them, it was no *wilful mistake*, but occasioned merely hence, that I thought you had discoursed with more shew of *Reason*, than indeed you did. For no better *Reason* could be given, why we must *fail* in *Duty*, if we furnish not men with *Assurance* that they can *account* for their *Faith*, than this, because it is our Duty to furnish them with *Assurance* that they can justifie their *Accounts* (as you set it) in the *plural*, of which the *Account* of *Faith* is one. However, because I saw you are one that love to walk in the *dark*, so that he who *traces* you most diligently, may possibly *miss* you; and when you are *hit*, have a trick of crying out, *You mistake, it is not I.* I aim'd again, and *hit* right. My Fault then, if it was one, was no sooner spied than amended; and if it may be forgiven, I am content that *you* and your *Council* of *Trent* shall be good friends as long as you can agree on't.

I. S. I had alledged further, that till *Protestants* produce the *Grounds* which prove their *Faith* to be *true*, it cannot with *Reason* be held *Truth*. You put my Discourse first in my words, only *leaving out* those which did not please you. *R. p.* 4.

C. Your *words* are these: *Truth is therefore Truth, because 'tis built on intrinsical grounds which prove it to be such; and not on private mens abilities, or their saying this or that: wherefore till those grounds be produced, it cannot be with Reason held Truth.* I left out indeed the words [*therefore*] and [*which prove it to be such*] not because I *disliked* them, but because I thought them *superfluous*, as being *implied* in the rest. Well, now you have them, what will they *avail you*, or *hurt me*? All I desire of you is, that you will stick as close to your *own words*, as you would tye me to do; which I suspect you will hardly do, because you begin to vary more than I did already, especially in leaving out the word [*intrinsical.*]

I. S. Then you *disguise* it in your *own*, and *laugh* at it for being too *plain*. *Ib.*

C. These are my *words*: *You might as well have said more plainly,*

plainly, What any thing is, that it is, whatever be the reason why it is so, or whosoever saith it is or it is not; yet can no man with reason believe it, till he have a reason to believe it. This I still take to be *all* that you meant by *Truth's being built on intrinsical Grounds*, &c. And you seem to *confess* it by your saying nothing to the contrary; for you are not *he* that useth not to tell all the World when he is wrong'd. I gather hence, that in your Account, To say a thing more *plainly*, is to *disguise* it; and to say we *know* it, is to *laugh* at it.

I. S. Thence you *start aside* to tell us, *That the* Vulgar Catholick *has less* Certainty *than the* Vulgar Protestant, *because the one has only the Word of his* Priest, *the other hath the Word of his* Minister, *and the Word of* God *in* Scripture *besides. Ib.*

C. Had I a mind to turn the *Dispute* into a *Wrangle*, I should here tell you, as you did me, You *leave out* those words you do not like. But *take* and *leave* what you please. Only tell me why I must be thought to *start aside*, when I step *straight forward* only to a *conclusion*, which naturally follows from your own *Premisses*? If *Truth* depend on *intrinsical grounds*, and not on men's saying *this* or *that*; can it depend any more on the Word of your *Priest*, than of our *Minister*? And therefore if the Word of your *Priest* be all that your *Vulgar Catholicks* have, doth it not also follow on that supposition, that they have less *certainty* than *Vulgar Protestants* have, who have, besides the Words of their *Ministers*, the Word of God too. But this is to walk where you have no mind to see me, and therefore it must needs be a *starting aside* out of the way.

I. S. Do *you* think *Catholick Priests* are at liberty to tell the *Vulgar* what *Faith* they please, as your *Ministers* may *interpret Scripture* as seems best to their *judgment of Discretion*? When you cannot but know they *dare* not teach them any *Faith*, but what the *Church* holds; nor does the *Church* hold any, but upon *Tradition*: *R. p.* 4.

C. *Say* and *Prove*, Sir, is your own Rule, and thereby you have here set your self a very hard task. *Prove* then *We cannot*

not but know firſt, *That your* Church *holds no* Faith *but upon* Tradition, whilſt the *Council* of *Trent* takes the *Word written*, as well as *unwritten Traditions*, for the *Rule* of *Verity* and *Diſcipline*. *Prove* again, that the ſame *Council* held no *Faith* but upon *Tradition*, decreeing the *No-neceſſity of Communicating in both kinds*, and yet confeſſing there was neither *Scripture* nor *Tradition* to build that bold *Decree* upon. *Prove*, *We know that your Prieſts dare teach no Faith but what the Church holds.* Not to mention any more, Have none of them ever taught the *Pope's Depoſing Power?* And doth your *Church* give that *liberty*, or *dare* they do it without her leave? Yet be it all as you ſay, Have the *Vulgar Catholicks* any more than the *Prieſt's* word for their *Faith?* If not, what I ſaid is true, and they cannot with *reaſon* hold your *Doctrine* for *Truth*, unleſs you will have a *groundleſs preſumption* that *Prieſts dare not teach any Faith but what the Church holds*, paſs for an *intrinſical ground of Truth, which proves* all they teach *to be ſuch.*

I. S. Again, you do well to ſay your People have it in *Scripture*, or in a *Book*, for they have it no-where elſe. *Ib.*

C. If by [*it*] you mean the *Word of God*, I ſay they have it there.

I. S. You know *Vulgar Socinians* and *Presbyterians*, and all the *reſt*, have it as much there. *Ib.*

C. For what reaſon you couple *Socinians* and *Presbyterians* ſo frequently, I muſt not now ſtay to ask. I grant they have the *Word of God* in the *Scripture* as well as we.

I. S. Then I ſuppoſe you do not think they truly have the *Word of God* on their ſide. *R. p.* 5.

C. I do not think that any, who *err in Faith* have the *Word of God* on *their ſide.*

I. S. To tell me, that *Truth* can depend no more upon the ſaying of a *Romiſh Prieſt*, than of an *Engliſh Miniſter*, when I tell you it depends not on any *private man's* ſaying, is not the Reply of a man *well awake*. *Ib.*

C. Let it paſs but for a *Dream*, if you pleaſe. Yet may the

Interpretation of it be of ſome concernment to your *Vulgar Catholicks*. For if I ſay *true*, as you grant I do, then whilſt they have no more but the Word of their *Prieſts* to build their *Faith* upon, they have (according to *me*) *leſs Certainty* than the *Vulgar Proteſtants*, and (according to *you*) *none* at all.

I. S. But *two* things more, ſay you, follow from my *Poſition*, which you fear I will not grant. *Ib.*

C. I remember them very well. The *Firſt* was, *That we cannot with* Reaſon *hold any thing for a Truth*, merely *becauſe the* Church *of* Rome *hath* determined *it*; *for her* Determination *is no* intrinſical *ground of* Truth, *but only an* outward Teſtimony *or* Declaration *of it: and then what's become either of her* Infallibility, *or* Authority *to command our* Faith?

I. S. Slips of *honeſt Ignorance* deſerve *Compaſſion* and *Inſtruction*; and becauſe I do not know this to be any more, I will be ſo charitable as to ſet you right. *R. p.* 5.

C. Such *Slips* I may be guilty of, for I am but a *Man*, and am not exempt from *humane Infirmities*: I ſhall thankfully therefore accept your *Compaſſion*, be attentive to your *Inſtruction*, and the rarer ſuch *Charity* appears in *you*, the more highly do I prize it.

I. S. Authority, amongſt thoſe who already admit it for *true*, has force to *prove* that to be *Truth* which depends upon it, and will conclude againſt thoſe who allow its *Veracity*, if it be ſhewn to be engaged *againſt* them. *R. p.* 5, 6.

C. By the way, what kind of *Authority* do you ſpeak of?

I. S. Humane Authority, ſuch as that of the *Church*, the *Infallibility* whereof, in deriving down *Chriſtian Faith*, we go about, you ſee, to demonſtrate. *Ib.*

C. So far good; but now, ſuppoſing this *Authority* be of force with thoſe who *already admit* it, what is it, I pray tell me, which can *oblige* men to admit it? If nothing, they may reject it, and be blameleſs.

I. S. It has not this *effect* upon humane nature by its *proper power*, as 'tis *meer Authority*; but becauſe *intrinſical Mediums* juſtifie it *worthy* to be relied on. *Ib.*

C. Muſt

C. Muſt not thoſe *intrinſical Mediums* be *known*, before it can *oblige* men to *admit* it?

I. S. Let that *Authority* come into *diſpute*, it will loſe its *credit*, unleſs it can be prov'd by ſuch *Mediums* to *deſerve* what it pretends to. *No Authority deſerves any Aſſent further than Reaſon gives it to deſerve. Ib.*

C. Till that *Reaſon* then appear, no man is bound to *aſſent* unto it.

I. S. The *Authority* of the whole *Catholick Church* would be no greater than that of an *Old Woman*, were there no more *reaſon* to be given for believing the *former*, than there is for believing the *later. Ib.*

C. I hear all this; have you any more to add for my *Inſtruction?* I would not loſe a drop of your *Compaſſion*, it is ſo rare a thing.

I. S. By this time I hope you ſee, that *all Truths are built upon intrinſical Mediums. Ib.*

C. Not one jot more, I aſſure you, than I did before: for you have neither told me what you mean by *intrinſical Mediums*, only you ſeem to hint that they are *Reaſons* why a thing is to be believed, and ſo are *extrinſical Mediums* to; neither have you ſaid a word that I know of, to ſhew how *all Truth is built upon them.*

I. S. You ſee alſo, that whereas you apprehended they would overthrow our *Church's Teſtimony* or *Authority*, ſuch *Mediums* (in caſe we *produce* them) are the beſt means to eſtabliſh it, and give it *force* upon our ſelves and others. *Ib.*

C. This alſo I ſee juſt as much as I did before. You ſuppoſe I *apprehended* (why, you know beſt, for I am half confident you never apprehended I did ſo) that the *intrinſical Reaſons* of your *Church's Authority*, when produced, would overthrow it. To whoſe *roving Fancy* owe we this *pure* and *fine Invention*, Sir? That which I *apprehended*, was this, That ſeeing *all Truths* depend on *intrinſical grounds*, as you ſay, and cannot be *held Truths*, till thoſe *intrinſical grounds* of them be *produced*: Therefore they are not to be *held Truths* for the *Authority* of your

Church, becauſe that *Authority* (whatever it be, and on what *intrinſical grounds* ſoever eſtabliſh'd) is no *intrinſical ground* of thoſe *Truths* to be believed. And have you yet ſaid one word to contradict this? Not a ſyllable, but talk at random of another thing.

I. S. You alſo ſee, how it comes, that the *Church* can oblige to *belief*, not by a *dry commanding* our *Faith*, as you apprehend; but by having its *humane Authority* ſolidly grounded upon *Reaſon*, it ſelf becomes a *Motive* able to beget *aſſent*. *Ib.*

C. Now, Sir, I thank you, you have ſet me *right*, juſt *as I was before*. What I ſaw, you have made me ſee; and what I ſaw not, I ſee not yet. Such is the illuminating vertue of your *compaſſionate Inſtructions*. I ask not you, whether this great pains to tell me what I knew, and had told you ſo, was the buſineſs of a man *well awake*. Yet leſt you ſhould ſay, I was not *attentive*, I will repeat to you the *Leſſon* you have taught me. Your *Church's Authority* is *Humane Authority*, it has *force* to *prove* the *Truths* which *depend* upon it; it has this *force* amongſt thoſe that *admit* it, and it concludes *againſt* ſuch as *own* its *Veracity*; it deſerves no *Aſſent* farther than *Reaſon* gives it to *deſerve*, nor is it greater than that of an *Old Woman*, till better *Reaſon* be produced for it. Hence I conclude, Seeing we *admit* not your *Church's Authority*, neither *own* its *Veracity*, it *proves* nothing to us, nor *concludes* any thing *againſt* us. Seeing *Articles of Faith depend* not on *Humane Authority*, your *Church's Authority* can have no *effect* on humane Nature to *oblige* to a *belief* of them. Seeing all its *Credit* depends on its *intrinſical Reaſons produced*, till they be produced, we are not bound to give any *credit* to it. When theſe *Reaſons* ſhall be *produced*, its *Teſtimony* has but the nature of an *external Motive*, not of an *intrinſical Ground*. And therefore either your *Poſition* overthrows your *Church's Authority*, or *it* your *Poſition*, chuſe you which.

I. S. What is the *Second* thing you fear I will not grant?

C. If your *Poſition* be true, it will follow, *That the common People*

People must be allow'd their Judgment *of* Discretion: *for how, without the free use of that, they shall discern the* intrinsical grounds *of* Truth *when produced, and so with* Reason *hold it, I fear you cannot easily demonstrate.* Will you grant us this?

I. S. You gave your self the *Character* of a *Scrupulous* man; and I see by this, you have a mind to maintain it. *R. p.7.*

C. And if you will grant it, you will gain the *Character* of a man much more *liberal* than your *Neighbours*. If you grant it, 'tis I doubt, but in *mockery*, because you so often laugh at us for desiring it.

I. S. You know that those who *write* and *print*, can have no design their *Books* should not be *read*; and you know those that *read*, will and must *judge* of what they do *read*. *R. p.7.*

C. Yet if their *Books* contain nothing else but *unsensed Characters* (which is the thing you say of the *Scripture*) and he that *reads* or *interprets* gives the *sense*, I see not to what end they would have their Books *read*, and therefore neither why they *write* them: nor indeed how any one can *judge* of them, unless they would have them *judg* only of the *fineness* of the *Characters*. Pray, Sir, let me ask you, Can you think *God* writes to less purpose than *men* are wont to do? If he have caused a *Book* to be *written*, and that to *all*, was it not his *Will* that his *Book* should also be *read* of *all* to whom it was *written*? or did he not intend they should *judge* of what they *read* therein, and *examine Doctrines* by it? Do you now grant us this *Judgment* of *Discretion* as exercised about *Divine Truths* revealed in the *Scripture*? If you do, I thank you for it: If not, to what purpose is your talk of *reading mens Books*, or *their writing* them that we may *judge*?

I. S. Indeed I think it no great sign of a *Judgment* of *Discretion*, to pretend to *discern* the *Truth* of *Faith* by *Lights* that do not shew it to be *true*. *Ib.*

C. Nor I neither.

I. S. You conclude, that I have set us all on *even ground*. Yes, for I set *Absolute Certainty* on the *one* side, and *Uncer-*

tainty

tainty on the *other*; and this, in your Language, is *even ground*. *R. p.* 8.

C. What I conclude, is thus proved: *The* Church *of* Rome *is to be believed only when ſhe produceth the* intrinſical *grounds of* Truth, *and juſt ſo far is the* Church *of* England; *or any other* Church *to be believed, and ſo all are of equal* Authority *to oblige in points of* Faith. This in my Language is *even ground*: for the *one* ſtands no *higher* in *Authority* than the *other*. Now ſay what you pleaſe of your *Certainty* and *Uncertainty* to gain the *higher ground* again.

I. S. Suppoſe we could not prove that *Proteſtants* are *not certain*, are they therefore *certain? L. p.* 4.

C. You imagine (it ſhould ſeem) that *all the certainty* of our *Faith* is this, that *Papiſts* cannot prove it to be *uncertain*. *A. p.* 6.

I. S. The *meaning* of my words is clearly this, That the *certainty* of the *Proteſtant Faith* muſt depend on their *own proofs* for it, not on any *man*'s being *able* or not *able* to *prove* the contrary. *R. p.* 8.

C. You *meant* ſo, you ſay, and the thing is *true*.

I. S. To avoid *proving*, you put upon me the direct *contrary* to what I affirm'd, *viz. That the* certainty *of* Proteſtant Faith *does depend upon our not* proving *they have none*.

C. I put no ſuch thing upon you, nor needed I do it to avoid *proving*; which I had never undertaken, but only to *reflect* on ſome parts of your *Letter*, who had undertaken to *prove* the *Nullity* of our *Rule*. Allow me then to give my own *meaning*, as you take the liberty to give yours. My *meaning* was this (*clearly* enough to him that would not *wrangle*): You imagine we have *no certainty* at all, and that we think our ſelves well enough, as long as you cannot *prove* we have none.

I. S. Well, but did I ſay *true* or no?

C. In that which you ſay you *meant*, you ſay *true*.

I. S. Becauſe I ſaid then, our *not proving* the *contrary* is no *certainty*

certainty to *Proteſtants*, you will have me imagine it is their *certainty*, nay *all* their *certainty*. *R. p.* 9.

C. Not that it is our *certainty*, ſo as we are therefore *certain*, yet *all* our *certainty*, for you imagine we have *no other*. And now 'tis my turn to ask, Do I ſay *true* or no? If true, why ſay you I wrong you? If no, you *grant* we have ſome other *certainty*, though you undertook to *ſhew* we have none.

I. S. You know well enough, that to prove *Proteſtants* have no *Abſolute certainty* of their *Faith*, is no hard task for a *weak man*. *L. p.* 6.

C. I meddle not yet with the word [*Abſolute*]: But ask, how know we this? *A. p.* 6.

I. S. You know any man may find it *confeſs'd* to his hand by *Proteſtants*. *L. Ib.*

C. Who, I pray, are thoſe *Proteſtants?*

I. S. Dr. *Tillotſon* in his *Rule of Faith*, p. 117, 118. *Ib.*

C. Dr. *Tillotſon* is but *one Proteſtant*; yet I am content he ſhould paſs for *many*. But his *Confeſſion*, that *Proteſtants* have no *certainty*, I find not. *A.* 6, 7.

I. S. No *Abſolute certainty*, if it pleaſe you. *R. p.* 10.

C. It pleaſes me not, and I'll tell you why anon.

I. S. If you do not underſtand *Engliſh*, I cannot help it; but any one that does, may find it, *p.* 118. *Ib.*

C. He ſaith there, that we are not *infallibly certain*, &c. but yet have ſuch an *Aſſurance*, as there is not any *juſt cauſe* of the *leaſt doubt*. Not a word find I of *Abſolute certainty*.

I. S. You would perſwade us you ſee it not. *Ib.*

C. Nor *you* neither, if you may be believed againſt your ſelf; for you tell us, We *ſeem* to *grant* we are thus *abſolutely certain* or *infallible* by virtue of *Tradition*, *A. p.* 7. If we *ſeem* to you to grant we are *abſolutely certain*, how can you *ſee* our *Confeſſion* that we are not ſo?

I. S. As if it were ſo ſtrange a thing for *Proteſtants* to *contradict* one another. *Ib.*

C. No very *ſtrange* thing, I confeſs, no not for *Papiſts*, even

Popes

Popes and *Councils*. Though it may ſeem *ſtrange* to ſome, that Pretenders to *Infallibility* ſhould do ſo.

I. S. Dr. *St.* did ſay at the *Conference*, They are *abſolutely certain*: And Dr. *Tillorſon* did ſay, we are not *infallibly certain*.

C. It may be ſo; I ſee not the Contradiction yet.

I. S. If one of thoſe Writers do not *ſeem* to grant, that they are *abſolutely certain* (or *infallible*) and the other *confeſs* they have no *abſolute certainty*, *Engliſh* is no intelligible Language in *England*. *R. p.* 10, 11.

C. Well, ſuppoſe we at preſent, for your ſake, that theſe two *Reverend Perſons* did *contradict* each other, will this prove that *Proteſtants* have no *certainty* of their *Faith?* Remember that you are ſpeaking of *ſuch* a *Confeſſion* of *Proteſtants* as may make it no hard task for a *weak man* to *prove* that they have no *abſolute certainty* of their *Faith*. Do you think the *Confeſſion* of *one* ſingle *Proteſtant* enough for this? Allow us but this way of *proof*, and ſee if it be not as eaſie for us (as *weak men* as we are) to *prove* the *uncertainty* of all your new *Trentan Creed*, yea and of *Tradition* too. Again, if the *Confeſſion* of *one Doctor* be *proof* enough for *Proteſtant Uncertainty*, tell me, with all your *Learning*, why the *Confeſſion* of *one Doctor* ſhould not be as good a *proof* for *Proteſtant Certainty?* Your *Weights* and *Scales* you ſo much talk of, would do well here, to ſhew which *Doctor's Authority* weighs moſt, and whether your *proof* weigh any thing at all. You have undertaken to *ſhew the Nullity of the Proteſtant Rule*, and thus you *prove* it, *one* Proteſtant *confeſſed they had no* abſolute certainty, *another ſaid they had*; *therefore* Proteſtants *have no* certain Rule *of* Faith, *or no* certainty of Faith. 'Tis eaſie indeed for any *weak man* to *prove* at this rate, that is, ſo as becomes a very weak man indeed. Once more I muſt mind you of your *Poſition*. For if all *Truths* be proved by *intrinſical grounds*, and depend not on *private* mens ſaying *this* or *that*, then the *uncertainty* of *Proteſtant Faith* cannot be proved (no not by *I. S.* himſelf)

from

from the *saying* of either *Doctor*, especially if the one *contradict* what the other saith, as you suppose, but have not yet *proved*. Are *not infallibly certain*, and *absolutely certain*, contradictory terms?

I. S. I proved formerly, that *absolutely certain*, and *infallible*, are all one; and it will come into play again ere long. *R. p.* 11.

C. It's well if your proof be not all *Play*: When I see it, I'll tell you what I think of it.

I. S. However, I only said, They *seem'd to grant*, &c. For the *Tenet* of *Faiths certainty*, as I may speak what I think, is *hearty* in them, its *absolute certainty* is but *seeming*. *Ib.*

C. Speak what you think? By all means, Sir. How else should we know you are made a competent *Judge* of *Hearts*, or your great *charity* in *judging* us *Hypocrites*, saying what we think not; or that when you charge men with a *contradiction*, you mean only a *seeming contradiction*, whilst your self think they mean the same thing; or lastly, the *strength* of the *weak man's proof*, proving that *Protestants* have *no certainty*, because he thinks the *Tenet* of *Faiths uncertainty* is *hearty* in them?

I. S. It is plain, that where *Churches* differ in *Faith*, *infallible Faith* in *one*, cannot stand with *certain Faith* in the *other*. *L. p.* 8.

C. Whence you may do well to take notice, that when our *Certainty* is once *proved*, no more is needful to *confute* your *Infallibility*. *A. p.* 8.

I. S. Absolute certainty, I pray you again, for Dr. *St.*'s sake. *R. p.* 13.

C. Certainty is enough, Sir; for that's it in *our Church*, which you say *Infallibility* in *yours* cannot stand with. And you say *true*, though you leave out *Absolute*.

I. S. It bodes ill, that you would have the word [*absolutely*] left out; it would make a jealous man suspect you had a design to palm a *certainty* upon us, which will prove *no certainty*. *R. p.* 13.

C. Ill to you, it may be, in that you cannot ſo confidently hereafter call on us for a *proof* of what we hold not: but fear not our deſign, your *Infallibility* will ſecure you from ſo palpable a *Cheat*.

I. S. I, for my part, cannot conſent to leave out that word, becauſe it is not *fair* to alter a word of Dr. *St.*'s; nor *poſſible*, though it were *fair*. For you and I cannot make him not to have ſaid what he hath ſaid; and though we ſhould agree to ſuppreſs that word amongſt our ſelves, it will ſtill be found in his two *Letters*, do what we can. *Ib.*

C. There let it ſtand. When you diſpute with *him*, agree on what terms you can; but 'tis not *fair* in a diſcourſe with *me*, who have nothing to do with the *Conference* or his *Letters*, to make me *ſay* what you pleaſe, and then bid me *prove* it.

I. S. Now we are thus far onward, 'tis pity to break for a ſingle word. *Ib.*

C. The *certainty* then that we have of the holy *Scripture*, which we acknowledge to be our *Rule* of *Faith*, we manifeſt after the ſame manner as you do *yours*. *A. p.* 8.

I. S. As we do our *Rule*, or *Scripture*? I know not which you mean. *R. p.* 14.

C. *Your certainty* of the *Scripture* I mean.

I. S. Do not you remember that *Abſolute certainty of Scripture* is not the point to be proved, though I told you ſo in the very page you cite? *Ib.*

C. I remember you told us ſo: And I remember too, that you told us, *p.* 22. *That to prove it in our way, we would find it a hard task.* Therefore I thought fit to tell you only, that *our way of proof* is the very ſame with *yours*, and ſo no harder a task for *us* than *you*. 'Twas *you* undertook to *ſhew the Nullity of our Rule of Faith*, which is *Scripture*: I knew by that, that the *certainty of Scripture* is not the point to be *prov'd* by *me*; but the *Nullity* of it, the point to be *proved* by *you*. And you might have remember'd, that I had ſaid in the ſame place, *p.* 8. *That you yielded our certainty of Scripture*; and yet you again, like

like a man *well awake*, ask me if I do not remember what I have told you I do remember.

I.S. But pray how do you *prove* that which is the *point*? *Ib.*

C. That which is the *point*, is to be *proved* by *you*, who undertook in your *Diſcourſe* to *prove* it. I only told you again, that it being granted us that *Scripture* is *God's Word*, we think that we ſufficiently prove the *certainty* of *every Article* of our *Faith*, when we ſhew it to be ſolidly grounded on that *Word*. *A. p.* 9.

I.S. We are not ſo far yet; it will be time to talk of *this* or *that Article*, when *this* or *that Article* comes in queſtion *R.p.*15.

C. I went not about to prove *this* or *that Article*, but only told you how we thought they might be *proved*. If it be neither the *certainty* of *Scripture* which is our *Rule*, nor of the *Articles* which are our *Faith*, what is it, I pray, you would have us *prove*, when it comes to our *turn* to prove?

I.S. At preſent you are to ſhew, that you have any means, unleſs you take *ours*, to ground any *Article* ſolidly on the *Word of God*. You are to ſhew your *interpretation* of it is *abſolutely certain*, and that *God's Word* means as you teach it does. *R.p.*15.

C. The *queſtion* at preſent is, about the *certainty* of our *Rule* the *Scripture*, which you undertook to prove *null*. When you have proved it *null*, it will be *vain* and *idle* to diſpute about the *means* of *underſtanding* it; and now that you have but *undertaken* it only, 'tis *unſeaſonable* to require of us to ſhew the *certain means* of *underſtanding* it, before you have made good your *undertaking*. I hope it may therefore now ſuffice to tell you, That we both have and uſe all the *means* which God hath left us for that purpoſe, and they are the very ſame again that the men of *your Church* uſe, not omitting *Tradition* (which I ſuppoſe is it you call *yours*) ſo far as it can be of any *uſe* to us. Our *Articles* (as I told you, *A.p.*9.) are *yours* too, contain'd in thoſe very *Creeds* which *you* receive, and all proved by your *own Writers*, yea and *Councils* too, to be ſolidly grounded on

Scripture, no otherwise than we prove them to be. What *more* do you desire? Two things *more* you would have us prove: First, *That we are absolutely certain of all this*: And secondly, *Not only* of this, *but of all that* more *which our Saviour taught his Apostles*. But we are not obliged to *prove* either of these. *Ap.* 9.

I. S. Dr. *St.* did affirm, that you are *absolutely certain* of *all this*, and of *all this* I demand *proof*. *Ib.*

C. What Dr. *St.* affirm'd is nothing to me, till I know in what sence he affirm'd it, which I am to learn (when it concerns me) of *himself*, and not of *you*. I therefore abstain from the word [*absolutely*] because you take it to be the same with [*infallibly*]. Whatever *proof* therefore you may demand of *him* for it, you ought not to demand any of *me*.

I. S. All mankind made *absolutely certain* and *infallible* all one, before I was born. And yet you would perswade us I break the *Laws* of *Disputation* by understanding that word as every body does. *R. p.* 16.

C. How every body understood *words* before you were born, I pretend not to know; nor say I, you break the *Laws* of *Disputation* by so *understanding* the *word*, but by *imposing* on me a *proof* of what I *affirm'd not*.

I. S. I would be glad to know how your self take it, who to be sure take it right. *Ib.*

C. I never *used* it, and therefore am not concern'd to tell you how I *take* it. But if any *Protestant* affirm himself *absolutely certain*, I must think (how *improperly* soever he may *speak*) that he means not he is *infallible*, but as *certain* as a man *can* or *needs* to be, and without all just *cause* of *doubting*.

I. S. With all then that a man can get here, he may be *deceived*. *R. p.* 17.

C. 'Tis *possible* he *may*, but there is no *cause* to *imagine* he *is*; 'tis honester dealing to perswade men to rest satisfied with that measure of *certainty* their condition admits, than to tempt them (as you know who did) to think they shall be as *Gods*, *infallible*.

I. S.

I.S. The *second* part of your charge is purely your own *Invention*, and as pleasant an Invention as ever roving *Fancy* suggested. *R. p.* 17.

C. 'Tis spoken so like *your self*, Sir, that I cannot be angry.

I.S. You *fancy* I would have you say, you are *certain* of those *points*, which you deny to be in *Scripture*, and think them to be added by the *Council* of *Trent*; and which therefore you *believe* not. And these *points* you understand by the [*more*] of which I demanded *proof*. ---*Ridiculous Folly!* to pretend we expected *Protestants* should *prove* to us such *points* as they *denied*, and our selves *held*, &c. *Ib.*

C. Good still. *You* will not give me leave to *laugh*, and I cannot get leave of *my self* to be *angry*. Pray tell me once again, What is it you expect we should prove?

I.S. Your *absolute certainty* of the [*more*] which you believe besides this, that *Scripture is Scripture*. *Ib.*

C. That *Scripture is Scripture*, is as *self-evident* as that *a Rule is a Rule*. That it is the *Word of God*, may be *proved*, and it hath been *granted*. What we believe *more*, I told you we prove from plain places of *Scripture* wherein it is contain'd; and we are the more *confirm'd* in our *Faith* by the *testimony* and *consent* of the *Primitive Church* in the *Creeds* especially. Will this *proof* satisfie? Then we have sufficiently proved *all* the *more* we believe; and could you thus prove *all* the *more* you believe, your *whole Faith* should be *ours* too. If it suffice not, I would fain know why your *Trent Council* called the *Nicene Creed*, *That Principle wherein all that profess the Faith of Christ, necessarily agree, and the firm and only foundation against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail.* What, I pray, was the *First Question* at the *Conference*?

I.S. Whether *Protestants* are *absolutely certain* that they hold now the *same* Tenets in *Faith*, and *all* that our Saviour taught his Apostles. *L. p.* 6.

C. What we *believe*, is contain'd in *Scripture*; and what is contain'd in *Scripture*, is that which Christ and his Apostles taught.

taught. We hold them the *ſame Tenets* in *Faith* which Chriſt and his Apoſtles taught. Is this enough?

I. S. Prove that you hold the *ſame*, and *all* they taught.

C. If the *ſame* that is *contain'd* in *Scripture* be *all* they taught, I have ſhew'd you how we prove we believe *all*. If that *ſame* be not *all*, then in bidding us prove we are *certain* of *all*, you bid us prove we are *certain* of *more than is contain'd in Scripture*, that is, what *you hold*, and what *we believe not*, but *deny*.

I. S. You *fancy* I would have you ſay, you are *certain* of *all* thoſe *points* which *you deny* to be in *Scripture*, and think them to be *added* by the *Council* of *Trent*.

C. I had ſaid (*A. p.* 11.) we have *certainty* of *all* that is taught us in *Scripture*, and we know of no *more* that Chriſt and his Apoſtles taught. That *Papiſts* ſay there is *more*, and that we are bound to *believe* it. And hence I *fancy*, that before you can oblige us to ſay we are *certain* of, or to believe *all this more*, it is your part to *prove* it. *Ridiculous Folly!* ſay you. Why? That a man ſhould not be *obliged* to *believe* a thing, till it be diſcover'd to him. Sir, I know very well, you expect not we ſhould *prove* to you ſuch points as *we deny*, and *you hold*: But do not you think, becauſe we cannot prove them, we ought therefore to confeſs we are not *certain* that we believe *all* that Chriſt and his Apoſtles taught? Do you hold no *more* but what is contain'd in *Scripture*? If *no more*, ſhew us *all* your *Trentine Faith* there, and we will believe it too: But if *more*, either you hold *more* than Chriſt and his Apoſtles taught, or *all* they taught is not contain'd in *Scripture*. If the *former* be true, you will confeſs we are not bound to *believe* that *more*; if the *later*, you bid us *prove* what *we deny* and *you hold*, and *ſay* we are *certain* of *all* this, that is, *more* than is contain'd in *Scripture*, and what we *believe* not.

I. S. You talk indeed of *Proof*, and that which you ſay of it is, That you *prove* when you *prove*. *R. p.* 19.

C. I have told you how we *prove* the *Scripture* to be the *Word of God*.

I. S.

I. S. Which, if one ſhould put you to it, you cannot. *R. Ib.*

C. Which when we would do, you ſay it *needs not*, nor ought you to *allow* it, *L. p.* 22. We ſhew alſo how we *prove* every *Article* of our *Faith* by *Scripture*.

I. S. Common words, which every *Heretick* may and does uſe. *Ib.*

C. But no *common work*, which every *Heretick* may or can do. Yet when we offer to do it, you tell us *'tis not time* to do it yet.

I. S. You decline Dr. *St.'s abſolute certainty*, nor know of any way to prove more than a *ſufficient certainty*. *R. p.* 20.

C. Dr. *St.'s abſolute certainty* I gueſs to be no more than *ſufficient certainty*, and if ſo, I decline it not, when 'tis my *turn* to *prove*. What's *ſufficient*, is certainly *enough*, and your *abſolute certainty* or *infallibility* I decline, becauſe it is *too much*.

I. S. This *ſufficient certainty* of yours may be *no certainty*. *Ib.*

C. That's abſolutely impoſſible; for *no certainty* is neither *certainty* nor *ſufficient*.

I. S. There goes no more to make a thing *ſufficient*, than to make a man *content* with it. *Ib.*

C. Juſt ſo much *more* as will enable him to obtain the *end* for which he *hath* it.

I. S. A yard of Cloath will make a *ſufficient* Garment for him who is *content* to go *half naked*. *Ib.*

C. Yes, if he have a mind to *catch cold* and *die*.

I. S. A Table without Meat, is a *ſufficient* Meal for him that is *contented* to *faſt*. *Ib.*

C. How a *naked Table* can be a *Meal*, I know not: however, it is not always a *ſufficient Meal* for a *Faſting Papiſt*, though a *Table* without *Wine* may ſeem enough for a *Feaſting* one. You told me your *abſolute certainty* and *infallibility* would come into *play* again ere long. Now you *play* indeed, and to tell you truly, I am quite weary on't.

The Second Dialogue.

I. S. I Will let you see in a short *Discourse*, how far your *Rule of Faith* is from being *absolutely certain*. *E. p.* 30.

C. Far enough, if you shew what you undertook to shew, the *Nullity* of it.

I. S. My *first* Proposition is this: *God has left us some way to know surely what Christ and his Apostles taught*. *R. p.* 2.

C. Your *Proposition* is granted, what now infer you from it?

I. S. Therefore *this way must be such, that they who take it shall arrive by it at the end it was intended for, that is, know surely what Christ and his Apostles taught*. *E. p.* 30.

C. If God have left us a way to know, then by that way we may know.

I. S. You must needs be wording on't your *own* way, to *shew* that either you did not *understand* it, or that you had a mind to inform us how neatly and dexterously you can *change* and *pervert* words, as well as *answer*. *R. p.* 21.

C. Where have I *changed* or *perverted* your words?

I. S. Is *shall* know, and *may* know, all one? *R. p.* 22.

C. They are not the same word indeed, and I now confess I did put *may* for *shall*, not in your saying, but my own. And if I had done it *wittingly*, to *shew* either my *Ignorance* or my *Art*, little reason could you have to be angry with so courteous an *Adversary*, who was willing to sacrifice the *credit* of his *Understanding* or *Sincerity*, as according to you I must have been to your service. But to say truth, I was not so kind; neither ever observed I the *change* I had made, till you inform'd me. I beg your pardon for this error, and have more cause to thank you for minding me of it, than it may be you thought of giving me. Let it therefore be *shall*, what mean you by it more than *may*?

I. S. Shall, that is, *cannot chuse but know*. *Ib.*

C. I confess I took them for terms *equivalent*, as they are often

often used, and therefore I *granted all* as true, thô I could not but smile at the *Argument*, which, as I understood it, proved only the *same* by the *same*, that is, nothing at all. But now you have discover'd my *Error*, you have spoiled my *Complement* too, as you call it, for what through *Error* was *granted* to *your advantage*, I must now *deny*, I mean the *consequence*, and my reason is, (in the words you have taught me) *because you cannot draw Beer out of a Jarr of Oyl.* More is in the *conclusion* than in the *Premises*.

I. S. I make account the *Way* to know the *Faith* of *Christ*, is not a *right Way*, if those who take it *can* fail to know their *Faith*, and therefore not the *Way* left by God. *Ib.*

C. I cannot yet pass your *account*, for you have said your self, (*L. p.* 15.) *that they who both take and follow the* Way *may leave it again.* You spake of *Tradition* the *only Way*, as you will have it left by *God*. Hence, by your own confession, I think it may be inferred, that the *Way* may be *right*, and yet they that *take* it mistake in the *Faith*.

I. S. You barely say We *may* know, with which it consists, We *may not* know; and so you make us a *Way*, in which they who *travel* may be always out of the *Way*. *Ib.*

C. This seems a little too childish. I say not *that's* the *Way* in which they that *travel* may be always *out of* the *way*, but out of which they may *wander*, and then they *travel* not in it, but are *out* of it.

I. S. Scripture's Letter, Interpretable by Private Judgments, is not that Way. L. p. 30.

C. Whom do you here *dispute* against? If against *us*, why do you not in terms *contradict* our *Doctrine? A. p.* 12.

I. S. Two very pleasant *Questions*. *R. p.* 22.

C. I hope then we shall have two as pleasant *Answers*.

I. S. Your *own*, and my *Title-page* tells you, I am disputing against the D. of *P's*. *Ib.*

C. They do so. I had reason therefore to fear you had forgot your self because you did not *contradict* his *Tenet*.

I. S. To ask, why I do not use *Terms* to your mind, is to ask, why the *Defendant* does not go to the *Plaintiff* to draw his *Answer*. *Ib.*

C. An Answer *pleasant* enough. But pray say, if an *Opponent* ought not to prove the *contradictory Proposition* to that which the *Answerer defends*?

I. S. I have happen'd to *propose* first what I *intended* to prove, before I *go about* to prove it, which I thought was the cleareſt way, and you will needs speak to my *concluſion* before you speak to the *premiſes*. *R. p.* 23.

C. And I have happened to say, that what you have *propos'd* to be proved, is not the *Propoſition* to be proved; and you quarrel with me for ſpeaking to your *concluſion* before your *premiſes*, whilſt there are yet neither *premiſes* nor *concluſion*.

I. S. I ſhall mind only the *Proof* here, and reſerve the *Inference* till I come to the place where I make it. *Ib.*

C. If you will needs *prove* what we *deny* not, as we cannot *help* it, ſo can we not be *concern'd* in it. But take your own way, I muſt not hinder your *courſe*, whoſe buſineſs you have made it only to *trace* you.

I. S. We experience *Presbyterians* and *Socinians* both take that *way*, yet differ in ſuch high *Fundamentals*, as the *Trinity* and the *Godhead* of *Chriſt*. *L. p.* 30.

C. The force of your *Argument* ſeems this. *If any men can be found, who wreſt or miſinterpret* Scripture, *then can it not be the* way *to know what* Chriſt *and his* Apoſtles *taught*. And muſt a *Rule* be therefore no *good Rule*, becauſe ſome who *uſe* it, *miſunderſtand* or *abuſe* it? *A. p.* 15.

I. S. What may you mean by this? *Ib.*

C. I ſay the *miſunderſtanding* or *abuſing* of any *Rule*, does not *change* the *Rule* it ſelf into a *bad* or *wrong Rule*, if it was a *good* and *right Rule* before, or *prove* that it was *not* ſo.

I. S. I take my *Ruler* and draw a *Line* by it; does the *crookedneſs* or *ſtraightneſs* of this *Line* depend upon my *underſtanding*? *Ib.*

C. To

C. To what end this talk of a *Ruler* and a *Line* can come in here I know not; a *ſcrupulous* man would be apt to fear you were now in good earneſt about to *ſhew* the *Nullity* of our *Rule* by a *Mathematical Demonſtration*, ſeeing you have got your *Ruler* in your hand. We ſhall ſee I hope anon what 'twill come to. Now to your *Queſtion*. Tho' the *crookedneſs* or *ſtraightneſs* of the *Line* depend not *only* on your *Underſtanding*, yet *partly* it may. He that *underſtands* not the *uſe* of his *Ruler* may draw wrong by it. It is no news to ſee a Boy *Rule* a whole *Page* with a ſtraight *Ruler*, and yet make never a *Line ſtraight*. Many things elſe may alſo cauſe the *crookedneſs* of the *Line*. Your *drawing* hand may *ſhake*, your *holding* hand may *ſlip*, you may have *bad eyes*, or be *careleſs*, *drowzy*, or *drunk*. However, let the *Line* prove as it will, the *Rule* is ſtraight whether you *underſtand* how to *draw* by it or no, which is that I affirm'd.

I. S. If you make the *Letter* of *Scripture* your *Rule*, and ſo *Private interpreting* the *Uſing* of it, and the *Sence* the *Line drawn*; unriddle to us, if you can, how the *Sence* drawn from the *Letter* can any more fail to be *true*, than the *Line* drawn by the *Rule* to be *ſtraight*; and which way that *Sence* can be *miſunderſtood*, and how the *Rule* can be a *good Rule*, if it be *uſed*, and the *Sence* to which it is a *Rule* be *miſunderſtood*? *R. p.* 25.

C. Had you ſuffer'd me to ſpeak to your *Propoſition*, I had poſſibly prevented all this your ſpeaking to no purpoſe. But you are in haſte to *ſuppoſe* I *ſay* what I do *not* ſay, and then will tie me to *unriddle* all that *you ſay*. 'Tis, if you would know, the *Letter* with the *Sence* that is our *Rule*; our *learning* it, and *comparing* Doctrines with it, is our uſing it; our *Belief* and *Practice* are the *Lines* drawn from or by it. And now ſet your *Fancy* a working again for a new *Riddle* if you pleaſe.

I. S. A *Grammar Rule*, let it be never ſo *ill underſtood*, will make good *conſtruction* in caſe it be *uſed*; ſo the *Scripture-Rule*, if it be, as you put it, *uſed*, muſt needs produce right *ſence*. *Ib.*

C. Where did I put it barely, *Uſed*, or where ſaid I, it would produce right *Sence*? Here's no *falſifying*! Did you indeed, Sir, never make falſe *Latine* by *miſunderſtanding* your *Rule*? or did your *Maſter* then tell you, that a *Grammar Rule*, let it be never ſo *ill underſtood*, would make good *conſtruction*, in caſe it be *uſed*, and therefore the *Rule* by *miſunderſtanding* whereof you made *bad conſtruction* was no *good Rule*? Or was it *you* that made *falſe Latine*, whileſt the *Rule* being *uſed* by you made *true*?

I. S. The truth is, a *Grammar Rule* is not a *Rule* till it be *underſtood*. *Ib.*

C. Then no *School-boy* can *miſunderſtand* his *Rule*, and every *School-boy makes* his *Grammar* by *learning* it.

I. S. He that *underſtands* not what 'tis, for *Nominative Caſes* and *Verbs* to agree, has no *Rule* to make them agree. *Ib.*

C. Not in his *underſtanding*, but ſurely in his *Grammar* he hath, or he goes to *School* in vain to *learn* it.

I. S. You will make the *Letter* of *Scripture* *firſt underſtood* to be the *Rule* of *underſtanding* it. *Ib.*

C. We make the *Letter* of *Scripture* having plain *Sence* and *intelligible* the *Rule* of our *Underſtanding* it, and being *underſtood* the *Rule* of our *Belief*. But when you ſay a *Rule* is no *Rule* 'till it be *underſtood*, do not you make *Tradition* *firſt underſtood* the *Rule* of *Underſtanding* it? If not, by what other *Rule* do you *underſtand* it?

I. S. You *Queſtion* on. Muſt a *Way* be a *wrong Way*, becauſe ſome that *take* it will not *keep* it? Riddle my Riddle again. *R. p.* 26.

C. More *Riddles* ſtill? Well, let's have 'em.

I. S. Pray who are or can be thoſe ſome who *take* it and will not keep it? *Ib.*

C. The very ſame, who (as you have told me) at one time *follow* it, and at another *leave* it.

I. S. As long as they *take* it, they *keep* it, I think. *Ib.*

C. And when they *leave* it, they *keep* it *not*, I am ſure.

I. S.

I. S. He who has no will to *keep* it, may when he pleaſes go *out* of it, but then he does no longer *take* it, and is none of the ſome of whom the *Queſtion* ſpeaks. *Ib.*

C. So may he that has no *care* to *keep* it, go out of it when he *conſiders* it not. Yet are they both the ſame of whom the *Queſtion* was (if it was not impertinent) who firſt *took* it, and after *went out* of it, and then *kept* it *not*. You ask, Who *can* do this? You anſwer, Whoever will *may* do it.

I. S. He that *takes* the *Way*, ſhall *certainly* arrive at his Journey's end, let him *will* what he pleaſes, and the *way* muſt needs be a wrong *way* if he do not. *Ib.*

C. Yea! Thô he *will* go *out* of it? And is the *way* a *wrong way* when he goes *out* of it? Doth a man's *taking* or *leaving* a *Way* make it *right* or *wrong*? This I imagine is it you would have. The *way* is *Right* that *you take*, and *Wrong* that *you leave*; and ſo we need not ask for the *Right way*, but which *Way you go*, and that to be ſure is *right*.

I. S. You imagine we are talking of one, who only *takes* the *Way* at firſt, and after *leaves* it. *Ib.*

C. If you talk of one that *takes* it and cannot *leave* it, you talk of no body that I know, and ſo may talk on for me.

I. S. The Argument proceeds of ſuch as make the way their *choice*, and *perſiſt* to follow no other to their lives end. *Ib.*

C. It proceeds of thoſe whom you ſuppoſe to *err* in *Faith*, and if it be *true* which you ſuppoſe, thô they may pretend to chuſe the *Scripture* for their *Rule*, they do not indeed *follow* it. In ſhort, till it be proved that God hath left ſuch a *Way* or *Rule*, as no man can poſſibly *err out* of it, *miſtake* it or *abuſe* it; and that it is not enough that he hath left us ſuch a *Way* or *Rule*, as men may *underſtand* and *obſerve*, if they be not wanting to themſelves; it will not follow, that the *Scripture's Letter*, as we own it, is not the *Way*, thô not only *Presbyterians* and *Socinians*, but the greater number of Mankind ſhould *own* it, and yet differ about *Fundamental* Points contained in it. *A. p.* 15, 16.

I. S.

I. S. As many as leave the *Catholick Church*, leave the *Way* left by God; and you, like a right *pleasant* man, would have it prov'd, that the thing cannot possibly be done, which we see is done by Millions; and would have us, who say they all do *err* and *mistake*, to prove they cannot. *R. p.* 27.

C. I say nothing now of the *Catholick Church*, but ask if it be not as *pleasant* in you, to suppose me to bid you prove it, because I say till it be *proved*, which I grant it can never be, your *Argument's* naught?

I. S. Will it not follow, that the *Way* by which a man that goes in it, comes to *Error*; is not the *Way* to *Truth*? *R. p.* 28.

C. If the *Way lead* him into *Error*, it is not the *Way* to *Truth*.

I. S. Since *Presbyterians* and *Socinians* both *Interpret Scripture* by their *own Judgments*, and one side knows not the *Doctrine* of *Christ*, it follows unavoidably, that the *Way* of *Private Interpretation* is no sure *Way* to know it. *R. Ib.*

C. Scripture we affirm to be the *Rule*, you will prove *Scripture's Letter Interpretable*, &c. is not the Rule, and at last conclude, *Private Interpretation is not the Rule.* What's all this to us? You have thus Hackney'd out a pair of *Metaphors* (*Way* and *Rule*) to course it on all four (which no *Metaphor* can do) so long after your nimble *Fancy*, till you have quite *jaded* them, and then you would turn them up to us for *Riddles*. No, Sir, take them as you have used them, and let them rest at *Private Interpretation*, for *Scripture* has no longer any room for them *so used*.

I. S. What do you talk of *erring*, or *mistaking* the *Way*? 'Tis true, these erring men mistake the *true Way*, but they mistake not the *Way* which you *call* the *true Way*. *Ib.*

C. If they err (as you suppose) they mistake what we *call* the *true Way*, the *Scripture*.

I. S. They *interpret* by their *Private Judgment*, and so *take* not *mistake*, *use* not *abuse* it. *Ib.*

C. Private Interpretation you must mean by *It*, for that is

it

it which you would make us *call* the *true Way*, though it be not. *Scripture* is the *true Way*, and their *private interpretation* is their *abuſe* of it.

I. S. Sure you mean, they miſtake the *Doctrine* of Chriſt, and ſo by miſtaking the *Way*, you wiſely underſtand miſtaking the *End*. *Ib.*

C. The *Doctrine* of Chriſt in the *Scripture* is the *Way* to a right *Faith*, and by miſtaking that *Way*, they err in *Faith*.

I. S. To what purpoſe do you tell us that men may *underſtand* and *obſerve* (as if *obſerving* concern'd our queſtion of *knowing*) if they be not wanting to themſelves? *Ib.*

C. A rare kind of *knowledge* it is that comes without *obſerving*. Should *we* not *obſerve* what *you* ſay, we ſhould *anſwer* you as you *deſire*, without *knowing* your *craft*. It is ſure to ſome purpoſe, to tell of *underſtanding a Rule*, and *obſerving* or *keeping* (ſo I meant) a *way*.

I. S. They who take a *right way*, not only *may*, but *muſt*, and cannot poſſibly *fail* of coming whither it leads. ---Men have no more to do with a *way*, but to *travel* in it, and ſo cannot be *wanting to themſelves* in that reſpect, if they do. *Ib.*

C. Men have not ſo much to do, it ſeems, as to *obſerve* the *Way*; but as long as they trot on any how, all's well enough.

I. S. Of the ſame batch is your *not underſtanding*, and *not keeping* a *Way*. As if they who *interpret* by their *private Judgments*, did not *keep* the *way* of *interpreting by private Judgments*. *R. p.* 29.

C. As if the *way* or *Rule* to be *interpreted*, and the *way* of *interpreting* were all one. Or as if by keeping his *own way* of *interpreting* a man may not *miſ-interpret* or *miſ-underſtand*, or go out of the *right way*.

I. S. Yet that very *miſ-underſtanding* is their *underſtanding* it to be the *Way*, and ſo they, even in your opinion, *miſ-underſtand not* the *Way*, however they *miſ-underſtand* by it. *Ib.*

C. Here's a *Riddle* indeed! Might not all this *confuſion* and *blundring* have been avoided, might I have ſet your *Propoſition* right

right at first? But so you had lost your *advantage* of traveling in the *dark*, lest your *Errors* should be too easily *discovered*. They *understand Scripture* to be the *Way*, yet cannot their *mis-understanding* of *Scripture* be their *understanding it* to be so, unless *mis-understanding* and *right understanding* be all one. And so, in my opinion, *understanding Scripture* to be the *Way*, they may yet *mis-understand* it, but not *mis-understand* by it.

I told you, *It follows no more that* Scripture *is not the* Way, *because men that own it differ about matters contained in it, than it follows, that because we see men mis-interpret and break good* Laws *daily, therefore those* Laws *are unintelligible, or cannot be kept, and must be thought insufficient to shew what the Lawgiver expects from them. R. p. 16.*

I. S. What *breaking* and *keeping Laws* is brought in for, you best know that bring them in. *R. p. 29.*

C. I brought them in to shew, that a *Rule* may be *intelligible* and *sufficient*, though some men *mis-interpret* or *break* it.

I. S. Our Discourse is only about knowing the Doctrine of *Faith*, and not at all about living up to it, and so hath nothing to do with those who know, but will not keep the *Laws*. *Ib.*

C. Yet if the *Rule* of *living* be no less a *true Rule* for being *mis-interpreted*, why must the *Rule* of *Faith* be for that *no true Rule*?

I. S. You end your *Discourse* very suitably to the rest, with an *instance* directly against your self. You see that *Laws* left to *private interpretation* are by all mankind judg'd *insufficient*, and *publick Interpreters* therefore set up every-where; and from the parity with them which are *insufficient*, you conclude the *Letter* of *Scripture* is not *insufficient*. *Ib.*

C. The *Laws* are of themselves a *sufficient Rule*, though liable to a *mis-interpretation*, and so is *Scripture*. What need there is of *publick Interpreters* of either, *who* they are to be, or *how* qualified, is not now the *Question*, nor shall you now engage me in it.

I. S. Any body but your self would have made another *use* of

of this *Instance*. As *God* can write much *plainer* than *men*, when he thinks fit, and has more care of their *salvation*, than they of their *temporal concerns*; another man would have concluded, that *God* did *not* intend their *salvation* should depend on the *privately interpretable Letter* of the *Divine Law*, which he left *less plain* than men made the *Letter* of *humane Laws*. *Ib.*

C. Another man possibly, with *your self* at his Elbow to prompt him, might both *suppose* and *conclude* as *wisely* and *piously* too as you do: He might *suppose* first, that *humane Laws* are *plainer* than the *divine Laws*, which will not be granted him, and thence infer, that *those* being of *temporal concernment* only, and *these* of *eternal*, and *God* being more careful of our *salvation*, than *men* of our *temporal concerns*, and able to speak *plainer* than they, 'tis reasonable to think, that *God* would give *Laws less plain* than theirs, lest they should be too *easily understood*, and men directed to *salvation too plainly*. For my part, I am too dull to learn this way of *concluding*, and must be content with this of my own. Because *God* loves us, and hath the greatest care of our *salvation*, and can speak plain, he hath left us a *plain* and *certain Rule*. And because I am sure, and all *Christians* agree that God hath left us his *Laws* in *Writing*, and no-where else that I can find, but in *Scripture*, he hath written them so *plainly* that we may *understand* them, and would have us take them for the *certain Rule* of *Life*.

I. S. We are now free to pass on to our *Fourth Proposition*. *Therefore Scripture's Letter interpretable by private Judgments, is not the Way left by God to know surely what Christ and his Apostles taught, or surely to arrive at right Faith.* *Ib.*

C. This, when it was *proposed* only to be proved, you call'd your *Conclusion*, and would not allow me to speak to it. Now 'tis your *conclusion*, if there be any, (for of the *Five Propositions* whereof your Discourse, as you say, consisted, this *Fourth* it should seem is now the *last*) you call it only a *Proposition*, and therefore I hope I have liberty to speak to it.

If then by *Scripture's Letter* you mean *unsens'd Characters*, I

confeſs it cannot be the *Rule* or *Way* to *know*. Yet if you can allow as much to *Scripture* as you would have us allow to *your Letter*, that it contains *good ſence* in *words ſignificant* and *intelligible*, we deny your *Propoſition*.

I. S. I wiſh ſome body would tell me for you, whether you take *Scripture's Letter*, in this period, for *unſenc'd* or *ſenc'd characters*; for truly I cannot tell my ſelf. *R. p.* 31.

C. If you underſtand not *Engliſh*, I cannot help it; any body elſe might ſee I take it for *ſenc'd characters*.

I. S. By the terms you put [*intelligible*] and [*ſignificant*] one would gueſs you mean *unſenc'd characters*. For [*intelligible*] imports what may be underſtood, but *is not* yet; and [*ſignificant*] what *may* be perceived by the ſign, whether it *be* or *no*. *Ib.*

C. You have a mind I ſee we ſhould know how excellent a *Critick* you are. You have now taught me what I confeſs I knew not before, that when a thing is *underſtood*, it is no longer *intelligible*, that is, *cannot be underſtood*; and that that is *not ſignificant* which doth *ſignifie*, but that is *ſignificant* which may be *ſignified*, whether it be perceived to be ſo or no. If it *ſignifie*, we muſt not call it *ſignificant*, or *ſignifying*; but if it be *ſignified*, though it *ſignifie nothing* to us, we muſt call it *ſignificant*. Who ever heard ſuch ſtuff as this before from a *Critick*?

But I ſhould remember you are of a *Communion* wherein ſuch *Language* may be as proper, as that other you mention (*p.* 1, 2.) *Worſhip* in an *Unknown Tongue is no* otherwiſe *intelligible*, than as, *That which may be underſtood, but is not yet*. And *Tranſubſtantiation* hath left no *ſign* to *ſignifie*, but makes the thing *ſignified* to be the thing *ſignifying* too, whether *that which may be perceived by it, be ſo or no*.

I. S. The *ſence* of the *characters* of *Scripture*, is the *ſence* of *God*; and the *ſence* of *God* is that which we are to *believe*. And ſo *Scripture-characters ſenced* ſignifie *Faith it ſelf* in conjunction with thoſe *characters*. *Ib.*

C. What means theſe words [*in conjunction with thoſe characters?*] *I. S.*

I. S. A *character ſenc'd* ſignifies a *character* with the *ſence joyn'd* to it. *Ib.*

C. A *character ſenc'd* or *unſenc'd*, are expreſſions we were never uſed to, but in reading ſuch Writings as yours. You may therefore interpret your own Language as you pleaſe for me, whether we can underſtand you or no. For my part I can underſtand no more by a *ſenc'd character*, but a *character* the *ſignification* whereof is *intelligible*. So *Scripture-characters* ſignifie *Faith it ſelf*, taken for the things to be believed, as is uſual.

I. S. Faith is the *end* to which we are looking for a *way* to carry us. To tell us then that *Scripture's Letter* taken for *ſenced Characters*, is this *Way*, is to tell us the *End* is the *Way* to it ſelf; that the *means* to get *Faith*, is to *have* it firſt; that when we know it, we know it; ---- and ſuch fine things. *Ib.*

C. Faith materially taken revealed in *Scripture*, is there revealed, that we may *know* and *believe* it. To *beget Faith* in us, is the *end* of *Faith's* being there *reveal'd*. And ſo we ſay truly, that *Faith ſignified* in *written characters* is the *way* or *means* to beget *Faith in us*; or that the *means* to get *Faith*, is to ſeek it in the *Scripture*; that when we diſcern it *there*, we know what we are to *believe*. Theſe are plain things, which you by your fine *Arts* would make obſcure. Pray now keep your *fine things* for *Bart'lemew Fair*.

I. S. You are not a man to be diſcouraged with ill ſucceſs. You are at your *diſtinctions* again. *Ib.*

C. Much, I fear, againſt your will, who ſeem to delight in *confuſion*. If again by theſe words [*interpretable by private Judgments*] you mean, *any way interpretable*, as any *private* man may poſſibly *wreſt* the words to make them comply with his own *Sentiments*, or through *ignorance*, *lazineſs*, and *neglect* of *helps* and *means* fit to be uſed, may *miſ-underſtand* them; you muſt have as wide a *Conſcience* and as little *Modeſty*, as the impudent and wicked *Author* of *PAX VOBIS*, who has the face to faſten ſuch a meaning on the ſixth of our 39 *Articles*, &c.

But if you mean, that *Scripture* as it may be *understood* by a *private* man of a *competent Judgment*, using such *helps* as are proper, is not the *Way*, we again deny your *assumption*, or if you will, your *Fourth Proposition*. *A p.* 13, 14.

I. S. I will, by your good leave, say in short, *Good* and *Bad Judgments*, *R. p.* 32.

C. As you please, Sir.

I. S. I take you then to say, that *Scripture's Letter*, as *interpretable by bad Judgments, is not the way*; but as *interpretable by good Judgments, is the way*. *Ib.*

C. You *mistake* me then: for I say it is not the *Way* as *any way interpretable*, or as it may be *wrested* either by *good* or *bad Judgments*.

I. S. By this account *three* parts in *four* of Mankind at a modest computation, have *no Way*: for so many *bad Judgments* there are at least. *Ib.*

C. Not very *modest*, to conclude so hastily, that *three* parts in *four* cannot *understand*, with all the *helps* God affords them, the *Scripture* in their *own* Language.

I. S. While we are inquiring which is the *Way* which God hath left, pray what have we to do with the *Judgments of men*? Can they make or unmake it? *Ib.*

C. Why are you then so busie with that, wherewith you have nothing to do? Why, whether we will or no, and when we forbid you to do it, will you, when you talk of the Way which God hath left, meddle with *private Judgments*? Are not those the *Judgments* of *men*? Were you not in a *Dream*, and fancy'd that *we* said what no body but *your self* said?

I. S. Your *distinction* unluckily has no relation at all to the *Question*. *R. p.* 33.

C. Most *unluckily* indeed to *you*, it has so near a relation to your *Proposition*, that it shews, how you have made it your *conclusion*, that you *conclude* nothing to the *Question*.

I. S. You say, that *bad Judgments* may *mis-understand* the *Letter* of *Scripture*, and that it is *not* the *way* to such; which

I

I think, is to ſay, that becauſe they may *miſunderſtand* it, therefore it is *not* the *Way*. *Ib.*

C. Where ſaid I, it is not the *Way* to ſuch? Beware of *unconſcionable falſifying*; and then be at what pains you will to tell us that you have read *Bayes* his *Play*, and learn'd of him to talk like a *Player*. *Pag.* 34.

I. S. The *Queſtion* is, Whether *Scripture's Letter interpretable by Private Judgments* be the *Way* left by God. *R. p.* 35.

C. Is it ſo? Anſwer then your own *Queſtion*, while we are enquiring after the *Way* left by God, what have we to do with *Private Judgments*?

I. S. I maintain it is not; and prove it, becauſe men, who take that *way*, *err*. *Ib.*

C. What you maintain in oppoſition to us, pray ſee it be *oppoſite* to our *Doctrine*. As to your *proof*, it needs another *proof* yet, *viz.* That men who take the *right way*, may not *err* from it.

I. S. I thought it needed no proving, that the *Way* left by *God* is not the *Way* to *Error*. *Ib.*

C. But this doth, that men who *take* it, may *not err* from it.

I. S. The *Propoſition* is of the *Letter Interpretable*, that is, *not yet interpreted*, or which has not the *ſence put to it*, and ſo is yet *unſenſed*. *Ib.*

C. Then your *Propoſition* is of *ſenſleſs Characters*, that they are not the *Rule* of *Faith*, which being *granted* you, you oppoſe no body, and ſo are left to diſpute with your ſelf.

I. S. When you diſtinguiſh the *Letter Interpretable* into *ſenſed* and *unſenſed*, you make a *diſtinction*, whereof one branch is not comprehended in the *Notion* to be *divided*. *Ib.*

C. 'Tis your *own diſtinction* indeed, Sir, and was never mine. You know I told you, (*A. p.* 13.) *that we are unacquainted with ſuch inſignificant things as unſens'd Characters in Scripture*; how then ſhould I diſtinguiſh the *Letter* into *ſenſed* and *unſenſed*. I only asked you which branch of your own *ſenſleſs diſtinction* you meant. You now tell me, you meant *unſenſe-*

racters, and that the *Letter Interpretable* can be no other: If ſo, for my part I think 'tis *nothing*, for I cannot ſee how *unſenſed Characters* are *Interpretable* at all.

I. S. Your *ſecond Diſtinction* is of *Judgments* into *competent* and *incompetent*, which is Twin to the former. *Ib.*

C. Are all *competent* then, or all *incompetent*, or are they *neither?*

I. S. I vouch'd for proof *Presbyterians* and *Socinians*, men of very *competent judgments*, who fall under none of your *ill qualifications*. *Ib.*

C. Then may they underſtand the *Scripture* in Points of *Faith*; or if they may not, they are of *incompetent judgments*. You ſuppoſe them to err, and yet to fall under none of my *ill qualifications* of *Ignorance*, *Lazineſs*, or *Negligence*. But how can you *prove* they do not? However, there is yet behind an *ill qualification* mentioned there by me, that you take no notice of: Why then may they not be of thoſe who *wreſt Scripture to comply with their own Sentiments*, ſuch as I told you (*A. p.* 15.) you might find enow of nearer home? This humour, I now tell you, I take to be the ſourſe of the moſt pernicious *Miſinterpretations*, as I fear it may be amongſt *Socinians*; and alſo ſome others, who affecting a *Supremacy*, labour ſo long to find it in *Scripture*, till at laſt they think they have found it in every *Verſe* that ſpeaks well of St. *Peter*: in like manner as they will needs prove *Tradition* it ſelf, thô the foundation of all *certainty*, by *Scripture*, our derided *Rule*.

I. S. I foretold I ſhould have nothing but an *unconcerning return* for an *anſwer*.

C. Either my *Anſwer* is a *concerning return* to your *Diſcourſe*, or your *Diſcourſe* is not *concerning* the *Uncertainty* of our *Faith*, much leſs hath it ſhewn the *Nullity* of our *Rule*, which you ſay it *undertook* to do. And truly I might have *foretold*, as eaſily as you, that it was in vain to expect from him, who had *proclaim'd* his Diſcourſe *unanſwerable* any *acknowledgment* that it *was anſwer'd*.

I. S.

I. S. You conclude with an *Argument* againſt my *Concluſion. R. p.* 36.

C. No *Argument* by your favour, Sir, nor did I *conclude* my *Anſwer* with it, as you well know. I was but telling in what ſence your *Propoſition* (after which *two* more then follow'd, thô but *one* of them now appear) muſt be taken, if you would prove any thing againſt us. To this purpoſe, I laid before you ſeveral *Suppoſitions* of ours, which you muſt by your *proof* overthrow, if you proved any thing to purpoſe. This is it you now call a *concluding* with an *Argument* againſt your *concluſion*. And laugh at your own conceit.

I. S. You *ſuppoſe* then---

C. Yes, we ſuppoſe, 1. *That the Scripture is God's Word. A. p.* 14.

I. S. So do I too, provided you mean the *true ſence* of it. *Ib.*

C. We mean no other. 2. *That it was written to be underſtood.*

I. S. Undoubtedly, but not by every one, barely by means of the *Letter*--- *Books* without *Maſters* will make but few *Grammarians* or *Mathematicians. Ib.*

C. And ſuch *Maſters* we want not. 3. *That it is written for the Inſtruction of Private Men.*

I. S. Yes, but not the *only* or *ſufficient means* of their *inſtruction*, barely by the *Letter. Ib.*

C. Not, ſuppoſing that *Letter* an *unſenſed Character*: nor, taking it as *ſens'd*, (as we always do) is it ſo our *Rule* or *Means* as to exclude all *other Means* for the underſtanding it. 4. *That Private Men are concern'd to underſtand it.*

I. S. Yes, and as much concern'd not to *miſunderſtand it. Ib.*

C. 'Tis true. 5. *That they have Means left them of God for the underſtanding of it, ſo far as it is of neceſſary concernment to them.*

I. S. Yes, and that *abſolutely certain Means*, the *Publick Interpretation* of the *Church*, or *Tradition.*

C. *Means* ſo ſufficient, as they need not fear but by the *bleſſing*

bleſſing of God on their pious endeavours to underſtand it; among which is the *Publick Interpretation* of the *Church*, and *written Tradition* in the *Creeds* and *Firſt Councils*. 6. *That uſing theſe Means as they ought, they may underſtand it, and thus it is to them the way to know ſurely what Chriſt and his Apoſtles taught as neceſſary to their ſalvation.*

I. S. Never mince it with *May*; they *ſhall* and *certainly ſhall* underſtand it who *uſe* the Means. *R. p.* 37.

C. Not unleſs they uſe them as they *ought*, ſo indeed they *certainly ſhall*.

I. S. 'Twas ill forgot, when your hand was in at *ſuppoſing*, not to *ſuppoſe* in among the reſt, that *Private Interpretation* is the Means left by God for underſtanding *Scripture*. *Ib.*

C. I left that for you, Sir, to *ſuppoſe*, leſt having no Doctrine of ours to oppoſe, you ſhould for want of a *ſuppoſition* of your own, have nothing at all to do.

I. S. If *Publick Interpretation* be thoſe Means, as it needs muſt, ſince I have proved, that *Private* is not; the *Scripture* plainly is no *way* to thoſe who only rely on the *Private* Means to underſtand it. *Ib.*

C. You have prov'd you ſay, that *Private Interpretation* is not the *Means* of underſtanding *Scripture*; whil'ſt the thing you *undertook* to prove was the *Nullity* of our *Rule*, the *Scripture* itſelf. You ſuppoſe elſewhere *Private Interpretation* to be our *Rule*, and now you would have me to ſuppoſe it is the *Means* of Underſtanding our *Rule*; and will needs ſay you have proved it is not, and thence Infer, that *Publick Interpretation* is the *Means*: pray, Sir, for *Logick's* ſake, tell me, if this be a *good conſequence*, without the help of another *ſuppoſition*, that there is no *other means*, which is yet unproved. Yet grant you this, *Scripture* ſtill Remains the *Way* or *Rule*, even to thoſe who rely only on *Private Interpretation*, this only follows from your *Premiſes*, that they uſe not the *right Means* of Underſtanding it. To tell you now my thoughts, *Interpretation* is not ſo properly call'd the *Means*, as the *Uſe* of the *Means*.

I. S.

I. S. Your *Proteſtants* are much beholding to your *Argument*, which ſhews, that *Scripture Interpreted as they Interpret* it, by *Private Judgments*, is no *Way* to them. *Ib.*

C. My telling you what *Proteſtants* hold, will ſhew no ſuch thing as you imagine; but let you alone to ſhew your *Art* in turning it into an *Argument*, and then they will ſoon ſee how much they are obliged to ſomebody.

I. S. Had you been confident of your performance againſt my *Argument*, you would never have thought of *changing* it, as you do, *page* 17. *R. p.* 18.

C. I muſt not contend with you in *confidence* of our own Performances, yet am I ſtill ſo confident that your *Argument* has proved nothing to the purpoſe, that I dare tell you again, that if you will *prove* what you *undertook* to *ſhew*, (whereby I think you meant *proving*) you muſt thus frame your Argument. *God hath left us ſome Way or Rule, which no man can poſſibly miſunderſtand or abuſe; The Scripture-Letter is not ſuch a Way or Rule as no man can poſſibly miſunderſtand or abuſe; Therefore, The Scripture-Letter is not the Way or Rule which God hath left us.*

I. S. No body elſe would have left out the *Principal Conſideration, Uſing the Rule*, and ſo coming to the right *Faith* by *uſing* it. *R. p.* 38.

C. Put in thoſe words then, when you pleaſe, tho I think them not very needful, ſeeing *Miſunderſtanding* and *Abuſing* ſeem to me ſufficiently to imply an *Uſing* of it.

I. S. Your *Argument* has all the Faults of your *Anſwer*, in ſhort.

C. Be it ſo, and farewel to it; for if it may not be ſerviceable to *you*, it is I am ſure of no uſe at all to *me*.

The Third Dialogue.

C. TO prove the *Infallibility* of the *Catholick Church*, (or as you put it, the *Abſolute Certainty* of the *Catholick*

Rule) You will grant to be your part, if you think it *need* any proof, as I queſtion whether you do or no, for (*L. p.* 12.) you ſay, *It is vain to talk againſt one* Infallibility, *unleſs we will ſet up another.*

I. S. It has been demonſtrated to you, (*Faith Vindic. p.* 37, 38.) that *Infallibility* and *Certainty* are the ſame. *R. p.* 39.

C. I have not ſeen your *Demonſtrations* yet, nor can I hope that I ever ſhall; becauſe I am ſure there are *degrees* of *Certainty*, and there can be none of *Infallibility*. If you think otherwiſe, to what purpoſe talk you of *Abſolute Certainty*, and will not conſent to have the word left out. If *Certainty* be no *leſs* than *Infallibility*, *Abſolute Certainty* can be no *more*, therefore you might have ſpared the word.

I. S. Nature tells us, that all *Diſcourſe* ſuppoſes ſomething *Certain*. *Ib.*

C. What then?

I. S. How is it poſſible then to *Diſcourſe* againſt *Infallibility*, or any thing elſe, without ſetting up and proceeding upon ſomething that is *Certain*, or *Infallibly* true? *Ib.*

C. A *Certainty* we grant, *Infallibility* we deny. The *former's* enough to ground a rational *Diſcourſe* upon, even againſt *Infallibility*.

I. S. If you will needs declare againſt *Infallible Certainty*, be but ſo candid, as to ſay ſtill you are *Fallibly Certain*, and ſee how your *Readers* will ſmile at your *Folly*. Pray ſpeak to this Point. *Ib.*

C. To be ſtill telling men, what they know already, might make them *ſmile* indeed; but ſhould we tell them, whilſt we are denying *Infallibility*, that we are *infallible*, it would make them *laugh* outright.

I. S. Are you not *deſerters* of *Humane Nature*, ſuppoſing there is no *Infallibility*, that is, *true Certainty* to be found amongſt men? *R p.* 40.

C. True Certainty there is, and that's enough for *Humane Nature*.

I. S.

I. S. Are you not *betrayers* of *Christian Faith*, whilst you leave it all capable to be a *lye*; nay, maintain the full sence of that wicked Position, [*All Christian Faith is possible to be false*] in Discourses directly framed for that set purpose? *Ib.*

C. Have the *Authors* of those *Discourses* no Names? Or are you *too modest* to name them? All we say, is, That *Men* are capable of being *deceived*. We affirm our selves as *certain* as *men* can be, that no part of the *Christian Faith* can be a *lye*, or is *possible* to be *false*.

I. S. Are you not *Blasphemers* of *God's Providence*, in declaring that he hath left less *certain* grounds for *Faith*, and for the *salvation* of *Mankind*, for which the *World* was *created*, and *God* himself *died*, than he hath for other things of *trifling* importance?

C. Do we *declare* all this, when we say, *The* Infallible God *hath by Men* inspired *with his* Infallible Spirit, *left us his* Word plainly written, *which is a sufficient means to secure us from being* dangerously deceived *in any thing necessary to our* Salvation, *if we diligently attend unto it, and use the proper helps of understanding it? A. p.* 17, 18.

I. S. Will it *expiate* from those *Crimes*, to talk *cantingly*? --Sayings fit to take the good Women that are much pleas'd with *Godly talk* in a *Sermon*, but *frivolous* in our *Controversie*! *Ib.*

C. Nay, *Sayings*, that shew his *wickedness*, that accuseth us for denying the *certainty* of the *Christian Faith*, against his own knowledge; and esteems the *talking* of what *God* hath done to secure us from *Error*, *frivolous Talk* in a *controversie* about the Certainty of our *Faith*; and which shew we have *sufficient certainty*.

I. S. I suppose you mean a *certainty* that is neither *fallible* nor *infallible*. *Ib.*

C. An *undoubted certainty*, so as we *cannot doubt* that we are, tho 'tis not *impossible* but we may be *deceiv'd*.

I. S. You tell men, that after all their pains, they can never

be *ſatisfied*, but their *Faith* may be *falſe*, that is, they can never be *ſatisfied* that it is *true*. *R. p.* 41.

C. Not *ſatisfied*? Yes, *fully*. Which they can never be, if they muſt ſtay till they be *infallible*.

I. S. When the *certainty* of your Grounds fail you, your laſt *Refuge* is, that the ſame *Infallible God*, that hath given the *means*, has aſſured his *bleſſing* to them that diligently uſe them. *Ib.*

C. I confeſs, 'tis *God's bleſſing* we moſt truſt to. And if you can hope for *certainty* by the uſe of any *means* without it, 'tis more than we can do.

I. S. This begs the *Queſtion*: For if the *Rule* you follow be not the *means* ordain'd by *God* to arrive at *Faith*, you have neither the *right means*, nor can you be aſſured of any *bleſſing* by uſing them. *Ib.*

C. The preſent *Queſtion* is of *Infallibility*, without which, ſay you, we want *means* of ſecuring us from being *deceived*, and are diſcouraged from taking due *pains* to compaſs the good we deſire. No, ſay I, for tho' there be no *Infallibility* among men, yet if we uſe the *means*, we may be ſecured by the promiſe of a *bleſſing* from the *infallible God*. How doth this beg the *Queſtion*? If our *Certainty* be not enough, where ſhall we find this *Infallibility* of your's? In *Tradition* ſure, if any where; for after we have been ſent from place to place to ſeek it, we have miſſed it every where elſe. *A. p.* 18.

I. S. Pray, Sir, who *ſent* you? *We* with whom you are diſcourſing, never directed you to any other, but to that of *Tradition*. *Ib.*

C. Roman Catholicks they were who ſent us. And who *you* are, I know not, whether *One* or *Many*, or what your *We* ſignifies.

I. S. What an everlaſting Trifler are you, to confeſs you have been running after *Butterflies* all this while? *Ib.*

C. Is your *Infallibility* but a *Butterfly*. Then it is fitter for *you* to keep and *play* with, than for *me* to *run after*.

I. S.

I. S. The *certainty* of *Scripture* is from *Tradition*. *L. p.* 7.

C. We have the *Books* of *Scripture* from *Tradition*, &c. *A p.* 19.

I. S. Therefore *Tradition* causes *certainty*. *Ib.*

C. *Tradition* we own a ground of *ſufficient certainty* of this matter of *Fact* — But this *Tradition* is not *that* of the *Church* of *Rome* only, but a more *univerſal Tradition* of *all Chriſtians*. *Ib.*

I. S. Then *Tradition* makes *Faith* as *certain* as *Scripture*. *Ib.*

C. Conveying the *Book* to us, it conveys the *Faith* contained in the *Book*; and witneſſing to the *Book*, as written by men *divinely inſpired*; it gives as good credit to the *Faith* therein contain'd, as *humane Teſtimony* can do, yet this *certainty* comes not up to *Infallibility*. *Ib.*

I. S. Yes, it does: for the *certainty* here ſpoken of, was *abſolute certainty*; and I proved it was the ſame with *Infallibility*. *R. p.* 42.

C. It does ſo, I know in *your* Account: But I now ſay, *humane Teſtimony* is not enough to ground an *infallible certainty* upon.

I. S. You ſay, *Tradition* for *Scripture* was more *univerſal*; ſuppoſe it ſo, was not *Tradition* for *Doctrine* large enough to cauſe *abſolute certainty*? *Ib.*

C. *More univerſal*, I meant and ſaid, than *that* of the *Church* of *Rome* only, yet not enough to cauſe *abſolute*, that is with you, *infallible certainty*.

I. S. Are not *Ten Millions* of *Atteſters* as able to cauſe *abſolute certainty*, as *Twenty*? *Ib.*

C. *Cæteris paribus*, the *more Atteſters*, the *more certainty*; yet how many ſoever, they are but *men*, and *fallible*.

I. S. When the number comes to that *pitch*, that it is *ſeen* to be *impoſſible* they ſhould all be *deceived* in the thing they unanimouſly *atteſt*, or conſpire to *deceive* us; their *Teſtimony* has its full effect upon us, and begets in us that *firm* and *unalterable aſſent* we call *abſolute certainty*; and the addition of *Myriads* more, adds nothing to the *ſubſtance* of that *Aſſent*, ſince 'tis wrought without it. *R. p.* 43.

C. This is as good *aſſurance* of a matter of *Fact*, as any man can

can desire; but what's all this to *Infallibility?* Here's some certain *pitch* of number (*which is it, I wish you could shew us*) unto which when *Attesters* (*every man of them* fallible) are come, (*one* unite *short may spoil all*) it may be *seen* (infallibly *or we may be deceived*) that 'tis *impossible* (*no* less *will serve*) they should be *deceived* or *deceive*. Thus add *fallible* to *fallible*, they become *infallible*, and *infallibly honest* too. And then we may *firmly assent* (*it should have been* infallibly) and the addition of *Myriads* more, will adde nothing to the *substance* of that *assent*, since it is wrought without it. Now what this *substance* of *assent* is but *assent*, who knows? Of the *firmness* of *assent*, I am sure there are *degrees*. Do not these words seem then to intimate, that though *Myriads* of *Attesters* cannot add to *assent*, barely consider'd as such, for so it was before; yet possibly they may add to the *degrees* of *firmness?* If so, then seeing that *assent* was before *infallible*, do not you seem to admit *degrees* of *Infallibility?*

I. S. But the main is, you quite mistake the nature of a long *successive Testimony*. *Ib.*

C. My comfort is, I have a wise and *compassionate Instructer* to set me right.

I. S. Let *Ten Thousand* men witness what *two* or *three*, who were the *original Attesters* of a thing said at first; and *Twenty Thousand* more witness in the next Age what those *Ten Thousand* told them, and so forwards, yet (taking them *precisely* as *Witnesses*) they amount to no more, in order to *prove* the *truth* of that thing, than the *credit* of those *two* or *three* first *Witnesses* goes. *R. p.* 43.

C. All this I knew before. Where's my *mistake* all this while?

I. S. The *Tradition* for the several *Books* of *Scripture* is not in any degree comparable either in regard of the *largeness* or the *firmness* of the *Testimony* to the *Tradition* for *Doctrine*. *Ib.*

C. I *grant* not this, yet let's *suppose* it in part at present. I see *first*, that your charging me with *mistaking* the nature of a *successive Testimony* arose from a *mistake* of your own. I said we have

have a *larger Teſtimony* for *Scripture* than *that* of the *Church* of *Rome*; you fancy me to ſpeak of a *larger Teſtimony* for *Scripture* than for *Doctrine*. And ſo all you have ſaid ſince, is to no purpoſe. Again, though the *Teſtimony* were *larger* for *Doctrine* than for *Scripture*, yet is it not ſo *firm*, becauſe not ſo *competent* an *Atteſter* of *Doctrine*, as of a *Book*. It is *ſufficient* indeed for the *Book*, the *Doctrine* whereof depends on the *credit* of the *firſt Atteſters*, and being *ſufficiently atteſted* by them, leaves no *credit* for any *other Doctrine* not agreeing with it, by how many ſoever at this day *atteſted*. Still yours is but *humane Teſtimony*, and that's not *infallible*.

I. S. Is not your *Tradition* for *Scripture*, *humane too*? *R. p.* 44.

C. It is,

I. S. If that may be *erroneous*, may not all *Chriſtian Faith* be a company of *lying Stories*? *Ib.*

C. We have no reaſon to *think* or *doubt* it *is*, and therefore ought not to *ſay* it *may be*. I told you before, that neither *Papiſts* nor *Proteſtants* content themſelves with *Tradition* for the *truth* of their *Faith*, but produce abundance of other *Arguments* for it. *A. p.* 19. But you had no mind to trace me there.

I. S. Seeing *certainty* of *Scripture* is proved by *Tradition*, what ſhould hinder me from *inferring*, that unleſs ſome *ſpecial difficulty* be found in *other things* that light into the ſame chanel, it muſt bring them down *infallibly* too? *R. p.* 45.

C. If no *ſpecial difficulty* be found in them, you may *infer* it may bring them down as *certainly*. Theſe *other things* are, I ſuppoſe, things *unwritten* in that holy *Book*.

I. S. So your *gift* of *interpretation* expounds theſe words of mine, but I do aſſure you, Sir, you are mightily *miſtaken*. *Ib.*

C. All things *written* in the *Book* are convey'd down in it, what then can thoſe *other things* be, but things *unwritten* in it?

I. S. I never yet told you that *all Faith* was not contain'd in *Scripture explicitly* or *implicitly*. *Ib.*

C. Well, if *all* be either *explicitly* or *implicitly* in the *Book*, then by *Tradition all* is brought down in the *Book* ſtill *implicitly*

citly at leaſt. And then once more, whan can thoſe *other things* be, but things *not written* in *Scripture*?

I. S. The *whole Body* of *Chriſt's Doctrine*, nay the *ſelf-ſame Doctrine* of *Faith* that is contain'd in *Scripture*, comes down by *Tradition* or the *Church's Teſtimony*. *Ib.*

C. I had told you all this, but ſtill you talk'd of *other things*. How, I beſeech you, *other things*, and yet *the ſame*? What mean you by [*nay the ſame?*] A man would think by this you made the *Doctrine* of *Scripture* either but a *part*, or not ſo *much* as a part of the *whole Doctrine* of *Faith*.

I. S. But with this *difference* (as to the *manner*) among others, that the *Church* that *teſtifies* it, having the *ſenſe* of it in her *breaſt*, can *explain* her meaning ſo, as to put it out of all *queſtion* to *Learners*, *Doubters*, and *Inquirers*, which the *Scripture* cannot. *Ib.*

C. Here's a *difference* indeed! The *Doctrine* is contain'd in *Scripture*, but it cannot *diſcover* it ſelf there to *Learners*, &c. The *ſame* is in the *Church's breaſt*, and there alone it may be *learn'd*. The *Church* teſtifies of the *Scripture*, that it is the *Word of God*, but 'tis *Jeſuitically* with an *Æquivocation* or *Mental Reſervation*, for it is not indeed the *Word of God*, but a *dead Letter* till the *ſenſe* be *put* to it, and that's in *her breaſt*. We have now found the *Scrinium pectoris*, but what's in the *Box*, who knows, or when it will all come forth? However, the *whole ſenſe* of *Scripture* is ſafely *lock'd* up there, and by the *Key* of *Oral Tradition* it may be open'd as there is occaſion. Now to me it ſeems all one, whether theſe (call them *ſame* or *other* things) be *contain'd* or *not contain'd*, be *explicitly* or *implicitly* in *Scripture*; they are *there*, if they be *there* at all, to no purpoſe, whilſt the *ſenſe* is in her *breaſt*. Not a ruſh matter if ſuch a *Book* had ſunk in the *chanel*. Yet it ſeems the *Church* had the kindneſs to hold up the *empty Cabinet* in her hand, whilſt ſhe ſecured the *Jewel* in her *boſom*.

I. S. St. *Peter's Ship* (the *Church*) that caught ſo many *Fiſhes* at firſt, (the Body of *Primitive Chriſtians*---) hath ſtored up Provi-

Provision enough for the succession of *Faith* to the Worlds end, and there we may find it to our hands. We need not therefore *fish* for our *Faith* in the *chanel* of *Tyber*, as your great Wit tells us. *Ib.*

C. I would not though for two pence, not have ventur'd that little *Conceit* of mine, seeing it is return'd home again with so rare a *discovery*. It would not be *mannerly* to enquire, when *Ships* catch *Fishes*, when they *sail*, or when they *sink*; nor how *Fishes* catch *themselves*, or how the *Body* of *Christians*, which are the *Church*, are caught by the *Church* which is that *Body*; or how those *Christians* are now the *Provision* of *Faith* stored up to the World's end? 'Tis plain, you mean the *Church* of *Rome* hath the *whole Doctrine* of *Faith* stored up in her *breast* for all Ages, and we are fools for seeking it in the *unsensed character* of *Scripture* where 'tis not. Yet have *you*, Sir, a *worthy opinion* of the *Scripture*. I would have said, St. *Peter* and his *Partners* with their *Net*, the *Word of God*, caught *Men* instead of *Fishes*, as *Christ* had promised; and with the same *Net* convey'd to us by *Tradition* in *Scripture*, the *Ministers* of *Christ* do still *fish* with good success. Consider if this *Allegorizing* of yours, would not suit better also with one of your *Sermons*, than with your *Controversie*.

I. S. All this is but *prelude*. Now comes Mr. *G.*'s *Argument*, the *first Proposition* whereof is this: *All Traditionary Christians believe the same to day, which they did yesterday, and so up to the time of our Blessed Saviour.* There is no denying this *Proposition*, but by affirming, that *Traditionary Christians* are not *Traditionary Christians*. *L. p.* 8.

C. But suppose these *Traditionary Christians* be so call'd from their adhering to a *Tradition* which reacheth not so high as our *B. Saviour*'s time, but only *pertends* to it, *&c. A. p.* 20.

I.S. Whether we only *pretend* to it or no, will be seen, when the *Fourth Proposition* comes to be examined. *R. p.* 26. The *Second Proposition* is this: *If they follow this* Rule, *they cannot err in* Faith. This is palpably *self-evident*. Whence fol-

lows the *Third*; and *therefore they are infallible*. *R. p.* 47.

C. But unleſs the *Rule* of *Tradition* which they *follow* be longer than it is yet proved to be, they may follow it, and *err* all along by following it. *A. p.* 21.

I. S. No doubt of it. *R. p.* 47.

C. Then prove it to be of ſufficient *length*.

I. S. As if we had never proved our *Tradition* reaches to our *Saviour*'s days. *Ib.*

C. I know not when. Suppoſe you had, that's not all: for let it be never ſo *long*, yet if you *follow* it *not*, you may *err*; and therefore are not *infallible*, except you ſhew you *cannot chuſe* but *follow* it. *A. p.* 21.

I. S. The *Fourth Propoſition* brought to prove that this *Tradition* we lay claim to, does indeed reach to *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, is this: *They could not innovate in Faith, unleſs they did forget what they held the day before, or out of malice alter it.* *R. p.* 48.

C. You undertake to make this out more clearly, (*L. p.* 18.) and therefore I would hear what you ſay there for our better Information. *A. p.* 21.

I. S. This is a moſt *evident* and a moſt *unconſcionable Falſification*: clear your Credit when you can, I charge it upon you as a *voluntary inſincerity*. *R. p.* 48, 49.

C. Good words, I pray, Sir. What is it I have done?

I. S. You have directly *falſified* that *whole Diſcourſe*, by pretending here that the *words* you *cite*, were to *make out* that *Fourth Propoſition* clearly; whereas the truth of that *Propoſition* was *made out* by me. *L. p.* 9.

C. I ſaw it, Sir, and ſpake to it too, as I ſhall ſhew anon. What are thoſe *words* of yours I *cite*? Recite them, I pray, and I'll recite my *Anſwers* to them.

I. S. Did Chriſt *teach any Error*? *L. p.* 18.

C. He did not. *A. p.* 21.

I. S. When a Father believ'd what Chriſt *taught him, and the Son what the Father believ'd, did not the Son too believe what* Chriſt *taught*? *Ib.*

C. No

C. No doubt of it but he did. *Ib.*

I. S. Run it on to the last Son that shall be born in the World, must not every one believe what Christ *taught, if every one believ'd what his Father believ'd? Ib.*

C. It is certain he must. *Ib.*

I. S. And will you then go about to perswade us that there actually is a company of men in the World, who adher'd to this method, all Sons believing always as their Fathers did, whereof the first believ'd as Christ *taught, and who notwithstanding err'd in matters of Faith?*

C. No, you may be sure on't. These then are *your words* I *cited.*

I. S. This *Discourse* was level'd at a *quite different* business, viz. *That a Church could not adhere to Tradition, and err in Faith at the same time.*

C. 'Tis true, and I saw it, that this was it you there *made out*; but I do not yet see how it is a *quite different* business from that which I said you *undertook* to *make out* more clearly. It was not *proving* I meant by *making out* more clearly, but *illustrating* or *explaining*; nor was it the *whole* (which, according to you, consists of a *Proposition* and its *proof*) but the *Proposition* only I said you *undertook* there to *illustrate*; and therefore I would not proceed to the *proof* which you would seem to *make out* (*p.* 9.) till I had consider'd how you *explain'd* the *Proposition* (*p.* 18.): which after I had done, I came to examine your *proof* (as you call it) both as it is *p.* 9. and as you again talk of it, *p.* 32. This you saw, *A. p.* 23. Where then lies the *Falsification?* The *Proposition* is, *They could not innovate in Faith.* Who are *they* that cannot? *Traditionary Christians.* And who are these? *They that hold the same to day, which they did yesterday*, &c. What cannot these do? *They cannot innovate*, or *err in Faith.* So say I you explain it (*p.* 18.) And do you not so, though it was upon another occasion? Do you not shew, that *if they hold to Tradition*, or be *Traditionary Christians*, they cannot, *whilst* they *are so*, (and when they are *not so*,

they are none of the *they* in the *Propoſition*) *innovate* or *err in Faith*? *Overcharging* often occaſions *recoiling*; and if your *Conſcience* feel it not, ſo much the worſe.

And now after all this noiſe, *one little thing* is yet to be *proved*, viz. *That theſe* Traditionary Chriſtians *adhere* undeclininglly *to an* unqueſtionable Tradition, *deſcending* really *and* unvariably *from* Chriſt *and his* Apoſtles, *and could not* poſſibly *do otherwiſe*; that is, *that they neither did nor could err from the Faith firſt taught, for this is but ſuppoſed hitherto.* *A. p.* 22.

I. S. Was it not *proved* in the *Fourth Propoſition*, and by me? *p.* 9? *R. p.* 51.

C. At your rate it may be. *And from this* ſelf-evident Suppoſition, *you* neceſſarily *conclude thus---Suppoſe* Traditionary Chriſtians *neither did nor could err, it is certain, they neither did nor could err.* Make what more you can of it. *A. p.* 22.

I. S. You *falſifie* our words, who ever ſaid a *Suppoſition* is *ſelf-evident*? *R. p.* 52.

C. Who ever ſaid you did? May I not uſe an *Irony*, without the guilt of *falſifying*?

I. S. You *falſifie* again, in affirming that from this *ſelf-evident Suppoſition*, I *neceſſarily* conclude, *&c.* *Ib.*

C. Juſt as before, in ſaying you *neceſſarily conclude* from a *ſelf-evident Suppoſition*. I ſay, all you conclude, amounts to no more. And make you what more you can of it.

I. S. Our entire *Diſcourſe* runs thus, if we muſt needs put it into *form* for you: *Thoſe who adhere to* Tradition *all along from the beginning, neither did nor could err in* Faith. *R. p.* 53.

C. No, not if it was *true Apoſtolical Tradition*, and they adhered *wholly* and *ſolely* to it, doing ſo they *did* not, *could* not err.

I. S. The Roman Catholick Church *does now, and did from time to time adhere to Tradition.* *Ib.*

C. To *Apoſtolical Tradition wholly* and *only*? I deny that.

I. S. They could not innovate in Faith, *unleſs they did* forget *what they held the day before, or out of* malice *alter it.* *Ib.*

C. You hope then we can have no advantage by pleading either

either of these, in barr to the *Infallibility* of *Tradition*. *A.* 22.

I. S. You do not, I suppose, desire we should prove, that Men had always *memories*, or that *Christians* were never so *malicious*, as to damn themselves and their posterity *wittingly*; and yet it can stick no where else. *L p.* 32.

C. Were there no danger of Mens *forgetting* what had been taught, 'tis hard to say, why the *Pen-men* of the *Scripture* should have been at the *needless* pains to *write* it. *A. p.* 23.

I. S. Your Discourse is this. *'Tis hard to say, That* Christians *should have remembred their Yesterday's Faith, had not the* Scripture *been written. R. p.* 54.

C. As thô to remember it from *Night* to *Morning* were enough. I say, 'tis hard to say, why the *Scripture* was written, if men might in no Age *forget* what had been taught.

I. S. The *Reasons* why *Scripture* was written, you might have read in *St. Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 16, 17. Where there is no such thing, as to make men *remember their Yesterday's Faith*, nor that *Scripture* is of *necessity* at all, but only that it is *profitable* for many *uses* there enumerated. *Ib.*

C. I know how unwilling some of you are that *Scripture* should be thought *necessary* at all, and also how much *ashamed* they are to say it is *unnecessary* altogether. Let it be (as you say) only *Profitable* for *Doctrine, Reproof, Correction, Instruction*: For my part, if men once *taught* the *Faith* can never *forget* it; If *Oral Tradition* can do *all* this without *Scripture*, and *Scripture* nothing of *all* this without *Tradition*, I think it is wholly *useless* and *unprofitable*, and therefore see no *reason* it should be *written*. And yet if mens *memories* be so very faithful, *St. Peter* seems to me to have been *too forgetful* of it, when with so much earnestness he endeavour'd, that men might be able after his decease to have these things always in *remembrance*, 2 *Pet.* 1, 15. and that by leaving them in *writing*. *A. p.* 23.

I. S. There is not so much as one word in the whole Chapter concerning the *remembring* or *forgetting* their *Faith*, but of *remembring* his particular *exhortations to good life*. *R. p.* 55.

C. Nei-

C. Neither said I there was; it was enough for me to prove hence, that men might *forget what they had been taught:* and if an *exhortation* to *good life*, why not an *Article* of *Faith*?

I. S. Notwithstanding all you have answer'd, men had *memory enough* not to *forget* their *yesterday's Faith. R. p.* 56.

C. Well, at present suppose it. Why might they not have *Malice* enough to *alter* or *corrupt* it?

I. S. Were *Christians* so *malicious* as to damn themselves and their posterity *wittingly*?

C. May they not be as careless of preserving the *Faith*, as of maintaining *Holiness* in themselves and their posterity, when they know that *Sin* is as *damnable* as *Error*? *A. p.* 23.

I. S. Be Judge your self. Do not many of your *Congregation sin often*, and yet *few* or *none* of them *desert* their *Faith once*? *Ib.*

C. I grant men may *often sin*, yet be neither *Apostates* nor *Hereticks*.

I. S. The *Reasons* why the *Parallel* holds not are these. *Ib.*

C. The *Word* of an *Infallible Instructer* shall pass with me for a *thousand Reasons*. Tell me only what these *Reasons* prove, it will suffice. If it be this, that men may *sin often*, and yet not *desert* their *Faith*, 'tis already granted. Is it any thing else you would prove by them?

I. S. My Reasons thwart the *universal alteration* of *Faith*, while *Christians* proceeded on the former *Rule* of *Tradition. R. p.* 59.

C. 'Tis granted also, that *Christians* adhering to *Apostolical Tradition*, there could be no *universal alteration* of *Faith.*

I. S. They clearly evince an *universal change* in the *Rule of Faith* over the *whole Body* of *Believers* is absolutely impracticable. *R. p.* 57.

C. Whatever your Reasons evince, we grant such an *universal change* will never be, because *Christ* will always have a *Church* of *true Believers.* But why might not a *considerable part* of the *Whole Body* alter the *Faith* first taught?

I. S.

I. S. The change must be *professed* and *open*, otherwise it *alters* not the case; and *posterity* will believe still on, according as things appear outwardly. *R p. 56.*

C. Men may *change* the *Faith*, and at first *privately* teach it to a few, not *professing* at all that they *change* it, but that they *retrieve* it, after a *change* had been made in it; and they who are taught it, may believe it and spread it, and it may at last be *openly profess'd*, without *professing* a *change* from what it was at first, which is not the wont of *Hereticks*.

I. S. Not unless it be said they went conscienciously upon some *other ground* than *Tradition*. *R. p. 57.*

C. And why might they not do so?

I. S. 'Tis impossible they should take up *another ground*. *Ib.*

C. Your reason I pray.

I. S. Because if they could not *innovate in Faith*, they could not innovate in *that* upon which they held *all* their *Faith*. *Ib.*

C. Very good. You were proving they cannot *innovate in Faith*, because they *adhere* to *Tradition*; now you prove they must *adhere* to *Tradition*, because they cannot *innovate* in *Faith*.

I. S. Men are more *tenacious* of their *Principles*---, than they are to *relinquish* all they have *receiv'd* upon those *Principles*. *Ib.*

C. That which they hold upon the *Principle* of *Tradition* is *all their Faith*, and you said but now, the *care* of their *Faith* made them hold their *Principles*; now you say, they are *less careful* of their *Faith*, than of their *Principles*. Thus have we *Circle* after *Circle*. Why would they hold their *Rule* or *Principle*? Because they were tender of their *Faith*. Why were they so tender of their *Faith*? Because they were more tender of their *Rule* or *Principle*. I ask not, how men may be properly called, *Tenacious to relinquish*: but pick the best sense I can out of your pure non-sense.

I. S. Tradition is the *Authority* of the whole *Ecclesia docens*---, which could never permit it self to be thought to have *attested* a *lye* hitherto. *Ib.*

C. If

C. If *Tradition* be the *Authority* of the *Church*, then (as you ſaid of that *Authority*) it is of no more *credit*, than a ſtory told by an *old woman*, till better *reaſons* be given for it; nor hath it this *effect* upon *Humane Nature* by its *own proper Power*, to prove *Truth*. But why may not the whole *Eccleſia docens* (ſuppoſing it the *Church* of *Rome*) *atteſt* to a *lye*?

I. S. It could never *permit* it ſelf (were there nothing but its own *intereſt*) to be *thought* to do it. *Ib.*

C. You ſay well, *not to be* thought *to do it*, for that would ſpoil all: Thô I know not how it can be hinder'd, but ſome will *think* ſo, It might be its *Intereſt* to *advance it ſelf*, and for that, to pretend a *falſe Tradition*, and to *forge evidences* to faſten a *lye* on former Ages.

I. S. None could be *competent Judges*, what was fit to be a *Rule* of *Faith*, but *they* who were ſo concern'd both in *Duty* and *Intereſt*, *Tradition* ſhould not be ſet aſide. *Ib.*

C. Then if *Intereſt* prevail'd above *Duty*, a *falſe Tradition* might be pretended, and the World muſt receive it on *their credit*, becauſe *they alone* are to be accounted *competent Judges*.

I. S. There muſt be ſome *great time* betwixt their diſcarding *Tradition*, and eſpouſing a *New Rule*; during which time we muſt imagine the whole *Church* (except perhaps ſome *few* that diſcover'd it firſt) would be made up of *Seekers*, ſome hovering one way, ſome another; in which caſe they would as yet have no *Faith*, and conſequently there could be no *Church*. *R. p.* 57, 58.

C. No, Sir, a *pretence* to *Tradition* as the *only Rule* might ſtill be kept afoot, and yet *changes* made in *Points* of *Faith*: whil'ſt they who *publickly oppos'd* or *privately diſown'd* them, adhering only to the *true Apoſtolical Tradition*, were the *true Church*.

I. S. If they could *innovate* in *Faith*, they muſt *pretend* to *Tradition* ſtill, when they had *evidently deſerted it*, that is, They muſt *profeſs* to hold the *Yeſterday's Faith*, when all the World muſt ſee, and every one's own heart muſt tell him the *contrary*. Which is the higheſt *impoſſibility*. *Ib.*

C. They

C. They might *pretend* to *Tradition*, when *evidently* to *others*, they had *deſerted* it in many things; and ſome of them, not *impoſſibly*, when their *own hearts* told them ſo.

I. S. 'Tis *impoſſible* any *Temptations* ſhould move all men, to fall into this *one ſin* of *altering* the *Faith*. *Ib.*

C. How *impoſſible* I know not, but I think it neither ever *did* or *ſhall* come to paſs.

I. S. Summing up my Diſcourſe, (*Sect.* 45.) 'tis manifeſt, you have no way to *anſwer* our *Argument*, but by *ſuppoſing* there was a time, in which there were no conſiderable Body of Men in the World either *good Chriſtians*, *honeſt Men*, or *valuing* their *credit*; but only a company of *Brutiſh*, *Godleſs*, *Lying Ruffians*, without the leaſt degree of *Grace* or *Shame* in *them*. *R. p.* 60.

C. It is then *unanſwerable* by me, for I cannot *ſuppoſe* this. Tho I am not convinced that Men cannot *innovate* in *Faith*, till it be ſhewn, not only that they have *memory enough* to remember *Teſterday's* teaching; but that they made a *right uſe* of their *Memory* to that purpoſe; and farther, that they had ſo *little wickedneſs*, as not only not *wittingly* to damn themſelves and their poſterity, but as not to *neglect* any *care* that ſhould be taken for their *ſalvation*; and *many things* more not yet ſhewn. For, what if *all* Sons did not *underſtand aright* all that Fathers had taught them?

I. S. If *all* did not, moſt of the *intelligent Paſtors* would, and could eaſily *inſtruct* them, it being both ſo *obligatory* and ſo *eaſie*. *Ib.*

C. Obligatory indeed, yet not ſo *eaſie* ſo to *inſtruct* them as to *convince* them; as you, I doubt not, find it in thoſe whom you ſuppoſe in error. Suppoſe again, ſome Sons were ſo *negligent* as to take no *care* either to *remember* or *teach* what they had been taught by their Fathers?

I. S. Then the *diligent* would *reprehend* them, and ſee things *amended*; and thoſe *careleſs* Perſons, eſpecially if *Paſtors*, reduced to their Duty, there being *Orders* on foot in the World to oblige them to it. *R. p.* 61.

C. How came it to pass then, that all *Hereticks* were not long ago *suppressed*?

I. S. 'Tis an unheard of *Negligence*, not to know or remember *Yesterday's Faith*. *R. p.* 61.

C. But 'tis a very *possible* thing, either not to *heed* what is *taught* to *day*, and so to be *ignorant* of it to *morrow*; or not to remember to *morrow* every thing that is taught to *day*; or being taught to *day*, to think of it no more to *morrow*, nor *many days* after, and to *forget* something of it at last. But what if some through *Ambition*, *Vain-glory*, and *Popularity*, set abroach *New Doctrines*, and taught them for *Apostolical Tradition*?

I. S. Good men would set themselves to *oppose* them, make known their *Pretences*, and lay open their *Novelties*. *Ib.*

C. I doubt it not; but not always so *effectually*, as the *Errors* should not have many *followers*. What if others to *save* themselves from *Persecution*, *conceal'd* part, and *corrupted* more of the *Doctrine* of *Christ* by their *own Traditions*?

I. S. Others would *oppose* their *unchristian* proceedings, *reveal* what they had *conceal'd*, *restore* what they had *corrupted*, and *manifest* that Doctrine they *subintroduced* had not *descended* by the *chanel* of the *Christian Church's Tradition*. *Ib.*

C. Yet here's *Tradition* pretended against *Tradition*, and many, it may be, carried away with the *Pretence*; and a *great number* (as you have said) *attesting*, the *attestation* is to be thought *sufficient*; and then a *greater number* can add nothing to it. Let others then *oppose* and *manifest* what they can, *all* possibly will not be *convinced*. What if others through a *blind zeal*, *ignorant devotion*, *superstitious rigour*, and *vain credulity*, *added* many things to the *Doctrine* of *Christ*, which by degrees grew into more *general esteem*, till at last they were *own'd*, and *imposed* as *necessary* to be *believ'd* and *practiced*?

I. S. If they belong'd to *Faith* they could not come in, while the *Rule* of *Tradition* was *adher'd* to, as has been prov'd and granted. *R. p.* 62.

C. True,

C. True, not whilſt *Apoſtolical Tradition wholly* and *ſolely* was *adher'd* to by *All*, whether they belong'd to *Faith* or *no*.

I. S. Perhaps *ſome Points* involv'd in the *main Body* of *Faith*, not yet ſo *explicitly* or *univerſally* known, might, on *emergent occaſions* be *ſingled* out, *defin'd*, and more eſpecially *recommended* than formerly, without any *detriment* to the *Faith* receiv'd, but rather to the *advantage* and farther *explication* of it. *Ib.*

C. I underſtand you thus. *All* Points of *Faith* are no more *explicitly* convey'd to us by *Tradition*, than by *Scripture*; but ſome of them *implicitly* only. 'Tis ſomething *elſe* which hath *all* in its *breaſt*, and by *degrees* vents it in *parcels*, as there is *occcaſion* to *define* and *recommend*; and then, thô men might before be *ſaved*, *without* the *knowledge* of it, it becomes as *neceſſary* an *Article* of *Faith* as any of the *reſt*. This is the great *Myſtery*, had *all* been given out at *firſt*, the *Box* being *empty*, would have been in ſome danger to have been *laid aſide* and *diſregarded*. Well, but after all this, If ſomebody ſhould ſtart up and ſay, *this* or *that Article* thus *defined* is no part of the *old Apoſtolical Tradition*, but a meer *innovation*, who muſt *decide* the matter? Who but the *Church?* All *Truth* is lodg'd in her *breaſt*. But which is this *Church?* That which holds to *Tradition*, the *Church* of *Rome*: Which is the *true Tradition?* That which the *Church*; *viz.* of *Rome* holds. What now if *Error* any of the former *Ways* brought forth, *grew*, *multipli'd*, *ſpread*, obtain'd moſt *power*, and drove *out* all that held the *naked truth* from all thoſe *Countreys* where it came?

I. S. Do any *Hiſtories* tell you, This *Error* ſpread over the *Whole Church*, without your ſuppoſing the *Queſtion*, that *ſuch* or *ſuch* a *Tenet* is an *Error*, which you *pretend* ſuch; which is above the skill of *Hiſtorians* to decide, and is only to be determin'd by examining *firſt who have*, *who have not a certain Rule of Faith?* *Ib.*

C. Over the *Whole Church* is too much. *Hiſtories* tell us of the ſpreading of *Error*, ſuch as both *You* and *We* account

ſo, over divers *Countreys*. What need is there of *ſuppoſing* the *Queſtion*, that *ſuch* or *ſuch* a *Tenet* is an *Error*, betwixt us who are *agreed* about it, as I think we are in that of *Arianiſm*? But as to what you add, pray tell me, If *Tradition* be the *Rule* of *Faith*, who can be *fitter* to *decide* what *Tenet* is *Error* than *Hiſtorians*, who ſhould know beſt what belongs to *former Ages*? But I forget, 'tis the *Oral Tradition* of the *preſent Church* is your *Rule* of *Faith*, and *Hiſtorians* have to do only with things *paſt*: and I agree with you, that it exceeds their *Skill* to ſhew us, that *all thoſe things* which your *preſent Church* calls *Errors*, were decided to be ſuch in the *firſt Ages*. However, ſeeing what is *Error* is only to be *decided* by *examining* firſt *who have*, *who have not a certain Rule of Faith*, I beſeech you be not ſo haſty, as you uſe to be, to call us *Hereticks*, whil'ſt this Point is but yet under *examination*.

I. S. But what are all theſe *rambling Queſtions* to our *Argument*, which inſiſts on the *impoſſibility* of *altering* the *Yeſterday's Faith*, but either out of want of *Memory*, or out of *Malice*? *R. p.* 62, 63.

C. They *ramble home* to your *Argument*, where you would not ſee them.

I. S. Apply them to *this*, and they loſe all their *force*. *Ibid.*

C. If *Faith* may be *alter'd all* or *any* of theſe *Ways*, then, if *they all* ſhould imply *forgetfulneſs* or *malice*, (as you ſay *moſt* of them do in ſome degree) men may through *forgetfulneſs* or *malice innovate in Faith*; and if they imply *neither*, men may *innovate* otherwiſe than through *forgetfulneſs* or *malice*. Either way your *Arguments* ſpoil'd.

I. S. I long to ſee't made out, that an *erring Church* can ſtill *plead Tradition*, and *adhere* to it. *L. p.* 18.

C. That an *erring Church adheres* (as I have formerly ſaid) to *Tradition*, I know no man that will undertake to make out to ſave your longing. But may not a *Church* that once *adher'd* to *Tradition*, leave it?

I. S.

I. S. That a *Church* may *follow Tradition* at one time, and *leave* it at another, is no news. *L. p.* 15.

C. If this be no News, then though we ſhould grant *Tradition* to be an *infallible* conveyance of the *Truth*, yet would it not make even *that Church* which *now adheres* to it *infallible*; and therefore the *Church* of *Rome* (though we ſhould confeſs her at *preſent* to *adhere* to *infallible Tradition*) could not *prove* her ſelf thereby to be *infallible*. That *Church* only is *infallible*, which *cannot err*; the *Church* that at one time *follows Tradition*, may *leave it* at another, and ſo doing *errs*. Therefore if the *Church* of *Rome* will be *infallible*, ſhe muſt prove not only, that ſhe *follows Tradition*, for ſo ſhe proves only, that ſhe *does not err*; but alſo that ſhe *cannot leave* it, for *infallibility* excludes all *poſſibility* of *erring*, by *leaving Tradition*. She muſt therefore ſeek out a new *Medium* to prove her ſelf *infallible*. *A. p.* 25.

I. S. Do not you ſee this already *proved* to your hand? *R. p.* 63.

C. No, truly, and I deſpair of ever hearing *him* prove, that a *Church* which now follows *Tradition*, cannot leave it, *who* has told me, 'tis *no News*, but a *common caſe*, for a *Church* that follows it, to leave it.

I. S. Not to repeat the many *Reaſons* produced for *this point*, Sect. 45. *R p.* 63.

C. You did not ſure mean, *I ſaw it proved to my hand* in thoſe *Reaſons* which you had not *then produced*. And I ſee as little yet, that they were *produced* for *this point*. I granted you *all that* for which you told me you *produced* them, when you mention'd them, but that the *Church* of *Rome* cannot *leave Tradition* was not it you then told me you produced them for.

I. S. Innovation and *Tradition* being *formally* and *diametrically* oppoſite, what proves ſhe could not *innovate*, proves alſo that ſhe could not *leave Tradition*, for this were to *innovate*. *R. p.* 63.

C. But where was it proved ſhe could not *innovate*?

I. S.

I. S. Our *Argument* you ſee has *already proved* it. I wonder you ſhould diſſemble a thing ſo *obvious*, and run forwards upon that *affected inadvertence* of yours. 'Tis the very thing our *Argument* chiefly aims at. *R. p.* 63, 64.

C. Aiming and *hitting* are two things; you ſay it *aim'd* at it, but I have ſhewn you it *miſs'd* it. And farther I tell you, that if ever you *hit* it, you will *wound* your ſelf. Will you prove a *Church* that *follows Tradition cannot leave it*, and yet ſay the *contradictory* to it is *true?*

I. S. You would perſwade us rather to prove our *Church* free from *Error*. *R. p.* 64.

C. I think it good advice, and for your encouragement have told you, that I think we are *obliged* (whenever you prove it) to be of her *Communion*. Will you not take my advice to make us your *Converts?* I ſaid alſo, 'tis the *eaſier* task for you, if ſhe be ſo; and if ſhe be not *ſo*, you *in vain attempt* to prove her *more* than ſo, *infallible*.

I. S. Your wiſe advice amounts to this, that you would have us prove our *concluſion*, without beginning with our *Premiſes*. *Ib.*

C. No, but that you would be content with a *concluſion eaſier* to be prov'd, and *enough* for you when proved; and that you would prove it by *better Premiſes*, *better known* than the *concluſion*.

I. S. All our *Faith* may be *Error*, if the *Teſtimony* of the *Church* (our *Rule*) may be *erroneous*; and if it cannot, nothing we hold of *Faith* can be ſo. *Ib.*

C. Then either the *Faith* of *Chriſt* may be *Error*, or *yours* is not the *Faith* of *Chriſt*. May the *Faith* of *Chriſt* be *all Error*, if the *Church* of *Rome* can *err* in her *Teſtimony*, then doth it depend on the *Infallibility* of your *Church* for its *truth*, not on *Chriſt's Veracity*.

I. S. Your meaning is, we ſhould only *prove* ſhe embraces no *Error now*; but what *proviſion* would this make, for her not falling perhaps into *Error* to *morrow?* *Ib.*

C. Againſt

C. Against the *possibility* of her falling into *Error hereafter*, I know of no *provision* can be made; but to be *sure* she does not *err* at *present*, is the best *security* she can have, and (to *you*) must needs be good enough: for sure you will not have it said your *Church* can be guilty of so unheard-of a *Negligence* as to forget to *morrow* her *yesterdays Faith*.

I. S. Were our *Rule* granted *fallible*, by what more *certain way* could we be directed to arrive at *Christ's sense? Ib.*

C. Take the plain *Scripture* for your *Rule*.

I. S. However, your *counsel* suits better with your *conveniences*, than these crabbed *Demonstrations*. *R. p.* 65.

C. Yours are indeed *crabbed* enough, and *plain Demonstrations* would suit better with Infallibility. But why will you labour to no purpose? All the World knows that a single *Instance* in one *Error*, is enough to *answer* all the *Arguments* can be brought for her *Infallibility*, seeing it must needs be false to say she *cannot err*, who in any one thing *doth err*. *A.p.*25.

I. S. If the *Premises* be *right* and the *Inference good*, the *conclusion* must be necessarily *true*. *Ib.*

C. I grant it.

I. S. *First* then you are to *answer* our *Argument*, and next to see the *Authority* that qualifies your *Instance* for an *Argument*, be above *Moral certainty*. *Ib.*

C. Your *Arguments* are not hard to *answer*, yet if I could not answer an *Argument* brought by some cunning *Sophisters* to prove, that *Men* can know as *certainly* as *God*, though some *Scholar* might laugh at me, no *Christian* would do so. If an *Instance* lie before me, so *certain* as there is no just cause to *doubt* of it, which is *Moral certainty*, it is enough to satisfie me an *Argument* which *contradicts* it, it is false, though I may not be able to discern the *Fallacy*, and will always be enough for one that values the *truth* more than the *credit* of a *Logician*.

I. S. 'Tis the right of the *Respondent*, to deny any thing that is not driven up to *Evidence*. *R. p.* 66.

C. 'Tis

C. 'Tis our *Right* then to deny an *Argument* to be good, ſo long as we have a clear *inſtance* againſt it.

I. S. You ſeem ſo kind as not to undertake to prove that an *Erring Church adheres to Tradition, if it be true Apoſtolical Tradition, and that it adhere to it wholly and ſolely. Ib.*

C. 'Tis no *kindneſs*, Sir, but abſolute *neceſſity*, I cannot undertake to prove what I know can never be proved.

I. S. Do not you mean by *Tradition*, ſuch an one as is built upon *living Voice and Practice? Ib.*

C. I mean a *Tradition* coming down *unvariably* from the *Apoſtles*, build it on what you pleaſe, or can, for me. I thought you had meant by it *living Voice* and *Practice*, and therefore know not well what you mean by its being *built* on them.

I. S. Then you *quit* your *own Rule*, by *requiring* men ſhould *adhere* to the *other wholly* and *ſolely*, and admit that a *Church adhering* to ſuch a *Rule*, is not an *erring Church. Ib.*

C. This is wonderful indeed! The *later* I admit, and have promiſed, that when you ſhew us ſuch a *Church*, we will be of her *Communion*, and yet not grant her *Infallible*, A. p. 26. But how do I *quit* our *own Rule*, or *require* men to *adhere* to ſuch *Tradition wholly* and *ſolely?* Is it in ſaying they do not *err* that *adhere* to it, on ſuppoſition they be *ſure* they *have* it? What a pleaſant Invention was this? When you are ſure of ſuch a *Tradition*, beſides *Scripture*, tell us of it, and we will embrace it willingly, as you were told before, *A. p.* 20.

It ſeems very odd to me, in the mean time, that men ſhould call us *Hereticks*---and yet prove their own *Infallibility* by an *Argument*; which, if it prove any thing to purpoſe, muſt prove that no man who hath been taught the *Faith*, can *err* from it, and ſtill withal confeſs that whole *Churches* may err. *A. p.* 26.

I. S. How do you ſhew our *Argument* muſt prove this abſurd *Poſition? R. p.* 67.

C. I

C. I ſay not it *muſt ſimply*, but if it prove any thing to purpoſe: For if it prove not this, ſome may *forget* or *alter* their *yeſterday's Faith.*

I.S. Our *Tenet* is, that though not *one ſingle man* can *err* while he *adheres* to our *Rule*, yet even ſome *particular Churches* may *leave* off *adhering* to it, and ſo *err* in *Faith.* *R. p.* 67.

C. How came you then to charge me ſo furiouſly with *falſifying?* Was not your *Argument* brought to prove, that *Traditionary Chriſtians* could not *innovate* in *Faith?* When could they not *innovate?* Whilſt they hold to *Tradition*, ſay you. And was not this it I ſaid you undertook to make out elſewhere? And do not you now confeſs 'twas the ſame? Surely you do, when you ſay they might err by *leaving* it. Yet then your Argument muſt prove this *abſurd Poſition*, as you call it, or it proves nothing to purpoſe.

Chriſt and his *Apoſtles* taught one and the ſame Doctrine, *Alterations*, 'tis certain, have been made in this Doctrine; and therefore without diſpute ſome have believed and taught otherwiſe than men were at firſt taught, &c. *A. p.* 26, 27.

I.S. Some particular Churches may err in Faith. *Ib.*

C. You are then to ſhew what ſpecial Priviledge the *Church* of *Rome* hath above all other *Churches* that ſhe cannot err. You ſay, they of that *Church* believe the ſame to day they did yeſterday, and ſo upwards. We bid you prove it. You tell us, if they *follow* this *Rule*, they could never *err* in *Faith.* But did they follow this *Rule?* You ſay they did. And if we will not believe it, there's an end on't. *A. p.* 27.

I.S. This is built on ſome few of your *wilful Falſifications.* *R. p.* 68.

C. If men will believe you, there's an end on't again.

I.S. Where did we ever bring theſe words [*if they follow'd this Rule*] for a *proof* that they hold the ſame, &c. *Ib.*

C. You brought thoſe words as an *Introduction* to your *Proof*, which amounts to no more than *your*, or *your Church's* ſaying,

ſhe did follow it. And what ſay you more, I pray? Yes, ſay you, ſhe could not *innovate*. Why could ſhe not? If ſhe could, ſhe muſt either *forget*, or through *malice* alter it. Why not ſo, or ſome other way alter the Faith? You ſay you need not prove that men had always Memories, *&c.* What's all this, but to ſay, your Church has men of *good Memories* and *little Malice*? And ſo if we believe you, ſtill there's an end on't.

The Fourth Dialogue.

I. S. YOU *Proteſtants* give us only a *general Latitudinarian Rule*, common to all the *Hereſies* in the World. *L. p.* 25.

C. Scripture is our Rule, and it is and ought to be the *common Rule* to *All*, even to *Hereticks*, though they miſerably abuſe it, and though I could tell you too of *Hereticks* that truſted more to *your Rule* than to *ours*. *A p.* 27.

I. S. Pray, Sir, uſe my words; I ſaid a *common Rule* to *them* and *you*. *R. p.* 71.

C. Your words were no more, but *common to all the Hereſies in the World*. Indeed for *Hereſies* I ſaid *Hereticks*, becauſe though *Scripture* ought to be a *Rule* to *Heretioks*, whereby they may *correct* their *Errors*; yet ſounds it ill to ſay, as you do, that it is a *Rule* to all the *Hereſies* or *Errors* in the World. But let it be (as you will have it) *common* to *Hereticks* and *Us*. I begin to hope by this, that you count *Us* no *Hereticks*.

I. S. Can that be *truly* a *Rule*, which they *direct* themſelves by, and yet warp into *Error*? *Ib.*

C. It may be *truly* a *Rule*, yea and the *only true Rule* of *Faith*, though they who pretend to *direct* themſelves by it, err. And they *warp into Error*, whilſt, pretending to be *directed* by it, they *direct themſelves* too much, and are not *directed* by *it alone*. *I. S.*

I. S. The *Socinians* will say the same of you. *Ib.*

C. I can easily believe they may. But *truth* depends not on *this* or *that* man's saying *this* or *that*.

I. S. How then shall this Quarrel be decided? *Ib.*

C. If no way now, yet by *Him* who gave the *Rule*, and will at last *judge* us according to it. In the mean time, the *Church* has done what it could to *decide* it, and hath given it for *us*.

I. S. How can an *indifferent* man, seeking for *Faith* by *your Rule*, be satisfied *they* abuse it more than *you*? *Ib.*

C. By impartially considering the *Rule*, and comparing the *Doctrines* with it.

I. S. 'Tis manifest you disagree in the *sense* of *Scripture*. *R. p.* 70.

C. Suppose we do.

I. S. What's the *Way* to arrive at the *sense* of it? *Ib.*

C. *Humble* and *diligent attendance* to it in the use of all *good helps* we can.

I. S. Certainly the *interpreting* it. *Ib.*

C. *Interpreting* is the *searching* for, and *conjecturing* at the *sense* of it by those helps.

I. S. *Interpretation* is *Giving* or *Assigning* to *Words* their *sense*. *R. p.* 71.

C. Words had their *signification* given them in their first invention, and admit of alterations by *use* and *custom*. No *Interpreter* gives the *Words* their *sense*, but *searcheth* to find it out, and *declareth* what he finds.

I. S. Do not you accept that *sense* of *Scripture* which your *private Judgment* conceives to be truly the *meaning*, and they in like manner, as they apprehend it ought to be *interpreted*? *Ib.*

C. What they do, I know not. We having consider'd well of all things which we know of to be consider'd, must needs accept of the meaning which we judge to be true. And truly whatever a man may be said to *accept*, I think no

man can *believe* what himself *judgeth* not to be *true*.

I. S. Is it not some clearer *Light* in you, must *justifie* you for *judging* them to be miserable *Abusers* of *Scripture*. *Ib.*

C. We usurp not to our selves a *Pretorian* power of *judging* others, and therefore need nothing to *justifie* us for doing what we do not. That we say is this, that *Hereticks*, whoever are so, going about to support their *Errors* by the *Scripture*, do abuse it. All the *Judgment* we challenge touching *Hereticks* in *particular*, is no more but a *Judgment* of *Discretion*, to discern for *our selves* by the best means we can use, whose Doctrine is *true*, whose *false*, that we may know which to *chuse*, and which to *avoid*. This we must do by the best *Light* that God hath given us, and by the *same Light* whereby we think our own Doctrine *true*, we must needs think theirs *false*; and as long as we do so, shun it. Which of us *judgeth truly*, we leave to the *Judgment* of God.

I. S. Your *own Interpretation* of it is, beyond all Evasion, that which *differences* you from them, and so 'tis your *peculiar* or *specifick Rule* of *Faith*. *R. p.* 72.

C. It *differences* us from *them*, but not our *Rule* of *Faith* from *theirs*, if theirs be *Scripture*: neither is it our *Rule* of *Faith* at all, but our *Act* about it.

I. S. Do they who *abuse* it, do it out of *Wilfulness*? *Ib.*

C. I presume not to know.

I. S. Do they use their *endeavour* to understand it? *Ib.*

C. Neither know I that.

I. S. The *fault* consists in pitching upon *that* for their *Rule*, which is indeed *no Rule* at all. *R. p.* 73.

C. That follows not, a thousand things may occasion a *misinterpretation* of the *true Rule* by some, tho neither you nor I can certainly say *this* or *that* was it.

I. S. Your *Rule* miraculously makes *Light* and *Darkness* consistent, *Christ* and *Belial* very good friends. *L. p.* 25.

C. God give you *repentance* of this *Blasphemy*. *A. p.* 28.

I. S. Your *Rule* equally *patronizing true Faith* and *Heresie*,

I had reason to affirm, that it *inferred* those *blasphemous Propositions*. *Ib.*

C. If you will thus add *Blasphemy* to *Blasphemy*, I cannot help it. Doth the *Scripture* indeed *patronize Truth* and *Heresie*, or *can* it do both? *This alone* you know is *our Rule*.

I. S. This being my Charge, it was manifestly your Duty to shew it does not, and that *only true Faith* can be grounded on *Scripture privately interpreted*. *Ib.*

C. You *charge desperately*, and it concerns you to make good your *charge*, or to *retreat* betimes. *Scripture* is the *Word of God*, on which no *Error* can be *grounded*, howsoever it be *interpreted*. If men will make their *own Interpretation* the *ground*, *Error* enough may indeed be *built* on that, but none on *Scripture*. *This* is (as your self) say, the *Generical Rule* we give. And *this* you say again is *common* to all *Heresies*, that is, *patroniseth true Faith and Heresie, reconcileth Christ and Belial*. I wish you may well *discharge* your self of all this. It concerns you not a little.

I. S. I only *mention* the *Blasphemy*, while I am *charging you* with it. *R. p.* 74.

C. That *shuffling* will not serve your turn, when you are charged with *blasphemous words*, first to *acknowledge* them to be *blasphemous*, next to say, you were *charging us* with the *blasphemy*, who never utter'd any thing like it, neither gave you the least occasion to utter it.

I. S. The *Difference constituting* your *Protestant Rule*, as distinguish'd from that of most abominable *Heretick's*, can only be [*as my own Judgment, or others of my side, thus or thus interpret the Letter of Scripture*] and wriggle which way you will, there it will and must end at last. *L. p.* 26.

C. Who can expect less, but that where men pretend to *Infallibility*, they should also pretend to *know* what is *our Rule* better than we our selves, poor *fallible creatures* do? *A. p.* 28.

I. S. We take it as ill of you, that you will have us believe *you* before our own *evident Reason*. *R. p.* 74.

C. I

C. I believe you.

I. S. You assure us *plain Scripture* is *your Rule*, that is, (as appears by your Discourse) as you are *such* a kind of *Protestant*. *Ib.*

C. As I am a *Protestant*, and a Member of the *Church of England*.

I. S. Plain, in what *Points*. *R. p.* 75.

C. In *all Points* necessary to Salvation.

I. S. To *whom*? *Ib.*

C. To *all* that are *capable* of understanding plain words and sense.

I. S. By what kind of *light*? *Ib.*

C. By the same whereby *other Books* are *plain*, as far as concerns the *Literal sense* of the *words* and *sentences*.

I. S. Experience tells us, That *Scripture* is not *plain*, even in the *highest Points* of *Faith*, since many follow it, and yet go astray. *Ib.*

C. They go astray, not by *following* it, but by endeavouring to make it follow *them*.

I. S. If it be so *plain*, all your *useful helps* are needless. *Ib.*

C. How *plain* do you mean? Thô a *Child's Lesson* be *plain*, yet needs he *useful helps* to learn it.

I. S. Scripture conceiv'd by you to be *plain*, can never be made out by you to be *absolutely certain*. *Ib.*

C. It is enough for us to be *morally certain* of *plain Scripture*.

I. S. Socinians proceed upon *Scripture*, *plain to them*, as their *Rule*, and yet *err*. *Ib.*

C. 'Tis *plain* they *err*, by *not adhering* to *plain Scripture*, but to their own *natural Reason*, wherewith they use all their *Art* to make the *Scripture* agree, contrary to the most *plain* and *obvious sense* of the *words*. The *Interpretation* of *Scripture* by any *Sect* of People, *Romanists* or *others*, is *extrinsecal* to the *Rule*, and no *constitutive difference* of it, as you imagine. *A. p.* 28.

I. S. Still *Scripture as interpretable* by *your selves* is your *particular Rule*, and not *extrinsecal* to it. *Ib.*

C. Scri-

C. Scripture as *interpretable* is not *extrinsecal* to our *Rule*, but is indeed our *Rule*; yet is the *interpretation* of it *extrinsecal* to it, which is that I said.

I. S. 'Tis your *own Interpretation* we said was *your Rule. Ib.*

C. We say 'tis not, and (according to you) it cannot be, who say that *Scripture as interpretable* is our *Rule*. I hope the *interpretation* of a thing, and the *thing interpretable* are not one.

I. S. Is not the *Sense* of *Scripture* your *Faith? R.* 76.

C. It is *materially*, that which we believe.

I. S. Is not that *essentially* your *particular Rule* of *Faith*, that gives you your *particular Faith? Ib.*

C. What's all this Cloud of Words for? We have no *particular Rule* or *Faith objectively* taken, but that which was ordain'd of *God* for the *common Rule* and *Faith* of *all Christians.*

I. S. Must I mind you again, that it is the very *essence* (as I may say) or nature of *Interpretation* to give you the sense of the *words* of *Scripture*, which in our case is your *Faith. Ib.*

C. You may say as you please, so you speak to be understood. But that's not always your design, else would you speak a little plainer. How often must I mind you, That the *Scripture* alone is our *Rule*, by understanding whereof we learn what to believe. The *Interpretation* of it (the *essence* whereof you talk of) is our *searching* for, and *discovering* of the *sense*, and so our *Learning* to understand it, and not our *Rule.*

I. S. Venture boldly to declare what is your *particular Rule.*

C. Our *Rule* in *General* is the *Word of God*; in *particular* (if you will needs have it so) and in *contradistinction* to *your Rule* of *Scripture* and *Tradition*, or *Tradition only*, 'tis the *same Word written*, or the *Scripture* only. And as differenced from both *Romanists* and other *Hereticks* and *Sectaries*, it is the same *Scripture* still, plainly delivering a *sense own'd* and *declared* by the *Primitive Church* of Christ in the *Three Creeds*, *Four first General Councils*, and *Harmony of the Fathers. A. p.* 28.

I. S.

I. S. Since *Differences* uſe to be *Eſſential*, whether are theſe words [*own'd and declared*, &c.] at all *eſſential* or not? *Ib.*

C. To our *Rule* I ſuppoſe you mean. I ſay they are not: and ſo you have loſt a fine Diſcourſe, *p.* 77, 78.

I. S. If not, ſince, if you be *orthodox*, you ought to have a *Rule eſſentially diſtinct* from that of *Hereticks* and *Sectaries*, what is this *Eſſential different Rule* of your's. *R. p.* 76.

C. I know no ſuch thing, as that the *Orthodox* and *Hereticks* ought to have *ſeveral Rules eſſentially*, as you ſay, *diſtinct*. Theſe may differ each from other in their *Words*, and yet not in the *Rule*, thô in the *interpreting* of it they do.

Thus have I endeavour'd (notwithſtanding the many *Squibs* you have thrown in the way to *ſcare* or *vex* me) to *trace* you ſtep by ſtep, where-ever I could diſcern the leaſt colour of *Reaſon*. And yet I confeſs in the far greater part of your long *Letter* unanſwer'd, and muſt be ſo for me. For ſhould I follow your friſking and playſome *Fancy* over hedges, and through puddles, as ſhe would lead me, I ſhould too well deſerve the Character of *an everlaſting Trifler*, for *running after Butterflies*, which you have ſo friendly beſtow'd on,

Sir,

Your Servant.

F I N I S.